



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Antisemitic Attacks

*col 411 Mr Speaker:* Before I call the Secretary of State to respond to the urgent question, I have a short statement to make. I know that all Members will be deeply concerned by the footage of apparently antisemitic behaviour that appeared online yesterday. I understand that a number of individuals have been arrested in relation to the incident, but that no charges have yet been made. Therefore, the House's sub judice resolution is not yet formally engaged. However, I remind all Members to exercise caution and avoid referring to the details of specific cases in order to avoid saying anything that might compromise any ongoing investigation or subsequent prosecution. ...

**Robert Halfon (Conservative):** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will make a statement on recent antisemitic attacks across the UK.

**The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):** No one could fail to be appalled by the disgraceful scenes of antisemitic abuse directed at members of the Jewish community in the past week. In Chigwell, Rabbi Rafi Goodwin was hospitalised after being attacked outside his synagogue. In London, activists drove through Golders Green and Finchley, both areas with large Jewish populations, apparently shouting antisemitic abuse through a megaphone. These are intimidatory, racist and extremely serious crimes. The police have since made four arrests for racially aggravated public order offences and have placed extra patrols in the St John's Wood and Golders Green areas. During Shavuot, as always, we stand with our Jewish friends and neighbours, who have sadly been subjected to a deeply disturbing upsurge in antisemitism in recent years, particularly on social media. Like all forms of racism, antisemitism has no place in our society. A lot of young British Jews are discovering for the first time that their friends do not understand antisemitism, cannot recognise it and do not care that they are spreading it. British Jews are not responsible for the actions of a Government thousands of miles away, but are made to feel as if they are. They see their friends post social media content that glorifies Hamas — an illegal terrorist

organisation, whose charter calls for every Jew in the world to be killed. Today, the world celebrates International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. Under Hamas, people are murdered for being gay.

Every time the virus of antisemitism re-enters our society, it masks itself as social justice, selling itself as speaking truth to power. This Government are taking robust action to root it out. We are leading the way as the first Government to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism and calling on others to do the same. As a result, nearly three quarters of local councils have adopted it. I have written to councils and universities that are still dragging their feet. They will shortly be named and shamed if they fail to act. All Members of Parliament, bar one, have signed up to it.

*col 412* We are also doing our utmost to keep the Jewish community safe through the £65 million protective security grant to protect Jewish schools, synagogues and community buildings. We are working closely with the Community Security Trust to ensure victims can come forward and report attacks to the police.

We recognise that education is one of the most powerful tools we have for tackling antisemitism. We are proud to back the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust and the Anne Frank Trust, among others, to ensure that we challenge prejudice from an early age. With the last holocaust survivors leaving us, we are also ensuring that future generations never forget where hatred can lead through—I hope—a new world-class holocaust memorial and learning centre next to the Palace of Westminster. It is currently awaiting the outcome of a planning inquiry. Some of the opposition to it has only served to make the case for why it is needed.

Today, the Government and, I hope, the whole House send a clear message of support and reassurance to our Jewish friends and neighbours. We seek a society where the UK's largest established religions can live safely and freely, and can prosper, as an essential part of a nation that is confident in its diversity but ultimately strong in its unity. ...

**Robert Halfon:** In a 2018 House of Commons debate on antisemitism, I said the air had grown tighter for Jews: “you feel very hot, you undo a button on your shirt and your mouth goes dry.”—[[Official Report, 17 April 2018; Vol. 639, c. 262.](#)]

Sadly, after yesterday's horrific incidents, highlighted by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State—particularly the rabbi being beaten up in Chigwell in Essex—I fear that the air has become even tighter. I thank my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Dame Eleanor Laing) for her strong support against antisemitism.

Since 2018, the Community Security Trust has recorded the highest ever number of antisemitic incidents—more than 1,800 in 2019. In Harlow just a few days ago, swastikas were graffitied on walls in a public walkway. Thankfully, they have now been removed. Why, in the 21st century, must Jewish schools and synagogues have guards outside? The growth of antisemitism has happened for a number of reasons. There are too many of what Vladimir Lenin called “useful idiots”, whether they are some Labour party activists, condemned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and those who use the conflict in Israel as an excuse; the BBC's Jeremy Bowen telling Jews to read negative articles about Jews; or the NUS giving moral equivalence to antisemitism and what it calls the liberation of Palestine. I remind the House that the so-called liberation is being conducted by Iranian-funded extreme Islamist terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah.

*col 413* What protections and support are being given specifically to Jews and to the Community Security Trust? What are the Government doing to educate pupils about antisemitism so that this evil is wiped out? Will there be severe penalties for those found guilty of antisemitic behaviours? As a proud British Jewish MP, I never imagined that I would live at a time when I and the Jewish community would question whether Britain is a safe place for Jews any more.

**Robert Jenrick:** ... We must ensure that this is a country where our Jewish friends

and neighbours feel safe, and I am sure that the whole House will send a strong message today of support and reassurance to them.

The Government will continue to support the Community Security Trust—I join my right hon. Friend in praising its work. Partly funded by the Government and partly by philanthropy, it helps to ensure the security of 650 Jewish communal buildings and 1,000 events every year. It has reported to us a steep rise this week in antisemitic incidents—a 320% increase in a week. I am afraid that that is likely to rise further as there is always a delay in reporting. We will continue to support the trust and we will work with the Metropolitan police and police forces in other parts of the country, who are putting out extra patrols in the coming days to provide reassurance to Jewish citizens.

We will also support groups across the country, for example, the Union of Jewish Students, which does so much good work for Jews on campuses across the UK who suffer antisemitic attacks and abuse. We will keep on with that work as well as the educational work to which my right hon. Friend referred. In my opening remarks, I paid tribute to a number of the fantastic organisations, such as the Holocaust Memorial Trust, which deliver that day in, day out, and have continued to do so even during the difficulties that covid-19 posed.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds (Labour):** ... What we saw and heard in the footage from the streets of London yesterday was vile antisemitism and sickening, threatening mysogyny. Those who engage in that appalling, terrible behaviour should feel the full force of the law. Time and again, we have seen these attacks aimed at the Jewish community. The Community Security Trust, which I also commend for its work, recorded 63 antisemitic incidents from 8 to 16 May. We send a clear, unequivocal message that that is not acceptable—not then, not now, not ever. I have been moved by the Jewish community's sharing testimonies at the weekend. I have contacted the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Community Security Trust to make clear the absolute condemnation on these Benches for those terrible acts.

There is too often a completely unacceptable pattern: distressing scenes in the middle east—we on these Benches have called for a ceasefire—can lead to a minority of people attempting to whip up hatred between communities. There is often an upsurge in Islamophobic attacks, too. Those who do that do not in any sense represent those who seek to bring about peace in the middle east.

*col 414* I understand that four men have been arrested, but I ask the Secretary of State whether anyone else is being sought. What more can be done, particularly in intelligence gathering, to prevent this kind of incident from happening again? What additional support is being given to places of worship and other key sites at this worrying time? Does the Secretary of State agree that, in response to those who seek to stoke division and hatred, we must stand united and send a message that they will never win?

**Robert Jenrick:** I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his strong words today, which will have been heard by Jewish communities across the country. The whole of the House of Commons is united in this regard. He is also right to say that whatever one's views are on the current conflict in Israel and Gaza, that is no excuse whatsoever for the kind of antisemitic abuse or, indeed, anti-Muslim hatred that we are seeing on our streets right now. Tell MAMA, which reports the number of anti-Muslim incidents, has also informed us that there has been a rise in incidents directed against the Muslim community in recent days. Both are unacceptable, and both need to be tackled.

The right hon. Gentleman is right to say that the police should be taking a lead, and we expect the police to be urgently investigating the issues that we have seen in recent days. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has spoken with the commissioner of the Metropolitan police, who has given assurances that the police will do everything they can to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice. Further

patrols are now happening in areas with larger Jewish communities in London, for example, and I know that other police forces in other parts of the country, such as Greater Manchester, are taking the same proactive approach. ...

With respect to the incident regarding the rabbi in Chigwell, Essex police have announced that they are investigating the incident as a religiously aggravated assault, and have appealed for witnesses. ...

**Andrew Percy (Conservative):** ... The fact that people feel emboldened to drive through Jewish neighbourhoods calling for the rape of women, or to march through the streets of London warning Jews that an army is coming against them, does not happen in isolation. It happens because antisemitism on campuses is ignored; because university lecturers who target Jewish students are not dealt with; because far-right holocaust denial content on online platforms is not dealt with; and because some people, some campaigners — including, perhaps, some in this place—place an emphasis on Israel and use emotive language that they do not use in relation to other conflicts, while giving Hamas, the terror tunnels and the murder weapons a free pass. That is why it happens: it does not happen in isolation, and enough is enough.

*col 415* I thank the Secretary of State for what he has said today, but I urge him to go even further. It is great that we are putting so much money into holocaust education, but we have to go further in ensuring that every child in this country is taught about antisemitism, as they should be taught about Islamophobia and all racism.

**Robert Jenrick:** I completely agree with my hon. Friend. It is crucial that we ensure that young people uphold the values of this country and understand antisemitism. That is one of the reasons why we were the first country in the world to sign up to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition, which makes it abundantly clear that anti-Zionism is antisemitism. It is one of the reasons why we fund the Holocaust Educational Trust, and why we have now expended its remit from going into schools to going into universities as well. ...

It is also important to underline the point that my hon. Friend made: Hamas is a proscribed terrorist organisation, and those considering its activities or reporting upon them should make very clear the kind of organisation it is and the relationship that the UK has with it, which is that we do not engage with a terrorist organisation.

**Stuart C McDonald (SNP):** ... There is never any excuse or justification for [antisemitism], and hatred expressed here helps absolutely nobody, anywhere. The events that have already been described were absolutely horrendous—vile, targeted antisemitism and misogyny—and our solidarity goes out to the Jewish communities directly targeted and to everyone across the country who has suffered such hatred. We support all steps to bring the perpetrators to justice and all initiatives to tackle antisemitism. ...

**Robert Jenrick:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for those remarks. Like him, this Government have zero tolerance for all forms of racism, including antisemitism. We must do everything we can to ensure that where individuals do perpetrate these crimes, they are brought to justice.

*col 416* **Michael Fabricant (Conservative):** ... it was frightening and horrible over the weekend to watch videos of people hurling abuse from cars; to hear about the rabbi who was badly beaten up; and to see pictures from the Arndale centre of jobs—from Bradford, I am told—intimidating shoppers and shouting antisemitic remarks. And it is dreadful that it is happening in this country. ...

**Robert Jenrick:** I, for one, never thought that I would see banners being held aloft on the streets of London, apparently with impunity, saying, “Death to Jews”, or individuals being able to drive for some time through neighbourhoods, broadcasting the kind of antisemitic bile that we saw over the weekend. That is disgraceful. It is wrong and we need to ensure that our police services are equipped to take action quickly and robustly when this happens again in the future. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will speak again to her counterparts so that they can ensure that

where such instances arise in the future, action is taken as fast as possible, as we would expect with regard to any other racist or intimidatory incident.

**Margaret Hodge (Labour):** ... Like others, seeing racist posters, swastikas, a rabbi attacked and a racist convoy going through north London, I could see that the message was one of hate and, often, misogyny. This House is sending out a very strong message today denouncing this vile racism. But our message cannot just be for today. Tragically, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not go away, and we must be able to debate and disagree without Jew hate or Islamophobia taking over. What action is the Secretary of State taking beyond today, and beyond the brilliant work that the Holocaust Educational Trust is doing with young people, to inform and educate communities throughout Britain, including elected representatives, so that a discussion on an international conflict does not morph into a national expression of hate?

**Robert Jenrick:** ... [Margaret Hodge] is right to say that this is, sadly, just one of a number of incidents, and past incidents of this nature have flared up at the same time as conflict in the middle east. In 2014, for example, there was a significant spike in antisemitic incidents. ...

We need to ensure that we are rooting out antisemitism and doing so through education, working with all parts of society. That is one of the reasons that the Prime Minister and I have appointed Sara Khan as our independent adviser, who will tackle extremism of any kind and ensure that it cannot exist with impunity in plain sight. ...

*col 417* **David Amess (Conservative):** ... and I am frankly bemused at how those events were allowed to happen in the first place. Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is more important than ever that the Government continue to support the work of the Community Security Trust, which does such vital work to keep the Jewish community safe through the protective security grant? ...

**Robert Jenrick:** The Community Security Trust has an absolutely essential role in supporting Jewish institutions such as schools, nurseries and places of worship—frankly, places that should not need to have security. As the father of Jewish children, it shocks me every time I take my children to synagogue or to their nursery to see individuals in stab-proof vests guarding the entrance to those places. That should not have to happen in this country, but it does happen today, and we will continue to support the Community Security Trust, giving it all the funding it needs to protect Jewish communities.

**Yvette Cooper (Labour):** ... The whole House will stand in solidarity with Jewish people across the country in the face of vile antisemitism, misogynistic hate speech, violence and incitement. No one should be in any doubt that attempting to blame Jewish communities for the actions of the Israeli Government is appalling antisemitism and is wrong. The Secretary of State will know that the kinds of incident we saw over the weekend are also being fuelled by online antisemitism and extremism, and he will have seen the recent CST report on Google and antisemitic imagery. What more is he doing to tackle this awful online antisemitism?

**Robert Jenrick:** ... The Home Secretary and the Culture Secretary are working closely on this issue. They are in contact with the providers to ensure that antisemitic and other hate speech is taken down quickly and that action is taken against the perpetrators. ... My Department is also funding organisations that are taking action to put a counter-narrative on social media, to educate people about the harm that is caused by antisemitism and to ensure that people of all backgrounds—particularly young people—understand that some of the memes and graphics that are being circulated as we speak are deeply antisemitic and deeply offensive to communities and are fuelling the kind of hatred that boiled on to the streets over the weekend.

**Simon Fell (Conservative):** We have seen vile physical and verbal assaults against Jews

in the real world, but there is also a deep well of antisemitic content online and on social media ... Does my right hon. Friend agree that these clearly antisemitic messages cannot be allowed to continue? ...

**col 418 Robert Jenrick:** ... It is not simply an issue of the large international providers; there are smaller ones as well. They all need to be subject to the regulatory regime that we are devising and will legislate for in the online harms Bill. ...

**Wera Hobhouse (Liberal Democrat):** ... On behalf of the Liberal Democrats, I would like to add our unequivocal condemnation of all forms of racism and hate speech, including the appalling antisemitic abuse recorded on the streets of London. ... Can [the Secretary of State] expand on how he sees the work of Government encouraging us here and the public at large to get to a place where we can stop such appalling racial abuse and misogynistic hate crimes?

**Robert Jenrick:** We are taking a number of actions in my Department, and we work with organisations right across society, including faith organisations, to ensure that those perpetrating abuse and discriminatory behaviour of this kind are brought to justice. We want to ensure that we have a tolerant society. We are proud of the diversity in this country, but we also want a united country in which all people feel comfortable and safe. ...

**Christian Wakeford (Conservative):** Today, Jewish people in my constituency and around the world will be gathering to mark the festival of Shavuot, and I wish them all a good and a safe Yom Tov. ... I have been contacted by constituents scared to take their children to shul, due to the appalling scenes of antisemitism on the streets of the UK over the weekend. Does my right hon. Friend agree with me that the Jewish community cannot be targeted due to the situation in the middle east, and will he reassure the community ... that the police will deal with all instances of antisemitism with the utmost severity?

**Robert Jenrick:** I hope I can provide the reassurance that police forces across the country ... are taking action to ensure that there are patrols and, where there are incidents, that they are investigated and individuals are brought to justice ...

**col 419 Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru):** ... Plaid Cymru has a long tradition of promoting peace over conflict and of standing alongside oppressed people. This includes calling for the human right of people in Palestine and Israel to be able to live in peace. The language we use in politics matters, and everyone seeking peace knows that words used irresponsibly can be twisted into weapons. This week, Jews in the UK have suffered hate speech, threats and acts of violence both on the streets and over social media. ...

**Robert Jenrick:** I think that the online harms Bill outlined in the Queen's Speech will be an important weapon in our arsenal, enabling us to take action against the virus of antisemitism and other forms of hate speech where they occur online. ... That is one of the reasons we pursued the IHRA definition, and have urged institutions to sign up to it, such as councils, universities and, of course, Members of this House. ...

**Steve Double (Conservative):** ... Will my right hon. Friend confirm that his Department will work closely with the Home Office to ensure that all those responsible will be held to account and face justice as soon as possible?

**Robert Jenrick:** Antisemitic crimes, like all those with regard to racism, are serious crimes, and we expect police forces investigating these issues to do so rigorously, robustly and swiftly, and for action to be taken against the individuals if they are found to require prosecution. ...

**Charlotte Nichols (Labour):** Last night, Jewish communities across the country began our celebrations for the festival of Shavuot, and I wish all of those marking it a chag sameach. The scenes of antisemitic and misogynistic abuse yesterday have been incredibly disturbing and have caused significant alarm and distress, coming off the back of a rise in hate crime incidents both online and in physical attacks on and desecrations of

our places of worship. I have been heartened by unequivocal condemnations from across society, including by the Muslim Council of Britain and the Palestinian ambassador in the UK, as they recognise that all forms of racism and oppression reinforce one another, that they cannot be fought in isolation from each other and that we all have more in common than that which divides us. ...

*col 420* **Robert Jenrick:** ... We are working with a number of different groups that help bridge the divide and ensure that there is greater understanding among different groups in society. ... The report that Sara Khan produced earlier in the year for the Prime Minister was significant, saying that there is more work to be done by schools, local councils and civil society organisations to take their responsibilities seriously now in rooting out extremism and encouraging a better understanding between different parts of society. ...

**Aaron Bell (Conservative):** ... I saw the scenes in north London unfolding on social media and obviously was completely appalled. While those events were unfolding the Metropolitan police tweeted: "Officers are in the area and are engaging with those taking part."

I do not wish to condemn the Metropolitan police for one misjudged tweet in the heat of the moment, but does my right hon. Friend agree that that tweet misses the mark entirely and does not take what happened yesterday sufficiently seriously? ...

**Robert Jenrick:** Yes, I do. I am grateful for the work of the Metropolitan police, Essex Police and other police forces across the country in recent days and the work they will be doing right now providing reassurance to Jewish communities, but my hon. Friend is right that the correct response to an incident like this is not merely engagement; the Jewish community, like all of us in society, wants to see action against the perpetrators of those offences. ...

**Martyn Day (SNP):** I think we can all agree with the Centre for Holocaust Education on the importance of education in tackling antisemitism. However, given that a recent survey found that only 37% of young people know what the term "antisemitism" means, what more can the right hon. Gentleman do to ensure adequate funding is made available for education programmes so that future generations are aware of the history and causes of antisemitism?

*col 421* **Robert Jenrick:** We have only to look on social media today to see that a very large number of our fellow citizens do not understand what antisemitism is, or else they would not be liking and sharing some of the memes and graphics, which are antisemitic and deeply offensive and are helping to fan the flames of the kinds of incidents we have seen in recent days. The Government are taking action in a number of respects, through the Holocaust Educational Trust, which the hon. Gentleman rightly praises, and the Antisemitism Policy Trust, which is doing work online, and through other works with the Holocaust education centre which we hope will be built near the Palace of Westminster and Holocaust museums across the country, such as the Beth Shalom museum in north Nottinghamshire, so that we can raise awareness of these issues and help to debunk some of the myths.

**John Howell (Conservative):** The antisemitism of the weekend has been inflamed by allegations originating with perhaps easily disproved campaigns concerning the al-Aqsa mosque, despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of Muslims worship there during Ramadan and Eid. My right hon. Friend has described a lot of what he is going to do, but what more can he do to stop antisemitic mistruths being used to drive a wedge between communities here in the UK?

**Robert Jenrick:** That is an extremely important point. As I have said, there is work to be done online and in our schools, and there is also work we can do through the creation of new museums and educational institutions ... There is also work for all of us just as citizens of this country, to call out antisemitism wherever we find it and see it, and ensure that there is no immunity—there is no safe space for it in the way

that I am afraid many people feel there is today.

**Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour):** Antisemitism, and any other form of racism, is utterly abhorrent and must be swiftly dealt with. Many of us are strong advocates for the Palestinian people, to stop them being evicted from their homes and to demand an immediate end to the current bloodshed, but for racists who parade as allies of Palestine to use this tragedy to fuel antisemitism and misogyny is utterly condemnable. ...

**Robert Jenrick:** As I said earlier, when we have seen conflicts arise or intensify in the middle east in the past, that has led to an upsurge in hate crimes against both members of the Jewish community and members of the Muslim community. We saw that in 2014. I hope that we are not witnessing a similar situation today, although I think many would say that we are. ...

*col 422* **Matthew Offord (Conservative):** ... The Community Security Trust told me this morning that it had recorded 63 confirmed cases of antisemitism over the weekend, with more cases expected. Most shockingly, that included a Jewish teacher being abused by pupils in the classroom. In the protests, we saw conflation of Jewish identity with Zionism, which ensures that British Jews are physically and verbally attacked for actions that occur in Israel for which they have no cause or control. ... one constituent told me that many people are asking the same question as before the 2019 election; namely, is there a future for Jewish people in this country? Can the Secretary of State please advise my constituents if there is?

**Robert Jenrick:** Yes, there certainly is. As the father of three young Jewish girls, I am absolutely committed to ensuring that the British Jewish community feel protected, feel safe and feel that they can continue to thrive in this country. They are our longest-established religious minority. They have added so much to this country over the generations, and I hope that they will do so for many, many generations to come.

**Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... does [the Minister] not agree that headlines such as “Israel launches airstrikes on Gaza Strip after Hamas rocket attacks” may prevent readers from understanding that Israel launched rockets in defence and not first? Does he agree that no resolution will be found if the media continue to stir tension with biased reporting? Further, will he confirm once more, to make it very clear, that Israel has a right to defend herself, and that while we may ask Israel to enter into peace talks, we will never disregard her right to defend herself against any attack?

**Robert Jenrick:** Let me be perfectly clear: the UK Government believe that Israel has a right to self-defence. The UK Government believe that that must be exercised proportionately and with due regard to civilians. ... If there is any route now to bring this to a peaceful resolution, it must be sought, and we are doing that at the United Nations and in every forum that is available to us. But we will also condemn any form of antisemitism that we see in this country. Jewish citizens are citizens of the United Kingdom. They are not in any way responsible for the actions of the Israeli Government, whether good or bad. They are citizens of the United Kingdom; they deserve our complete support, and they have it today.

**Tulip Siddiq (Labour):** ... my Jewish constituents are now feeling unsafe in their own homes. Will the Secretary of State commit to ensuring that these hate crimes are punished, and will he provide additional resources to protect community centres like JW3, Jewish schools and synagogues?

*col 423* **Robert Jenrick:** ... We must now ensure that residents of all those parts of London, and indeed elsewhere in the country, have the reassuring presence of police on the streets, and the knowledge that should these events arise again the police will be there to support them and to take action against the perpetrators. We will continue to provide support to the Community Security Trust and other good organisations that help to protect community centres, synagogues, schools and nurseries as far as we possibly can, and money is no object in that regard. ...

**Karen Buck (Labour):** I am glad that Westminster North is home to a large Jewish community. It is also home to the largest Arab community in Britain. Many people, across party, work very hard to ensure community cohesion. That work was undermined desperately by the events yesterday: the spewing of vile misogyny and antisemitism by the convoy that drove through Westminster North, among other areas. The police have acted swiftly with arrests and reassurance patrols, but can the Secretary of State reassure me that that support will continue over the long term, not just over the coming days and weeks? ...

**Robert Jenrick:** The hon. Lady is right to say that in London, as in many other parts of the country, relations between the Jewish community and the Muslim community are generally good, and inter-faith dialogue is generally strong. ... I have asked Sara Khan, as part of her work, to provide recommendations to us on how we can provide better advice to local councils on how to spot and tackle extremism; which groups they should not be interfacing with; and, where they do find extremists in their communities, what action they can take to root it out. Extremists should not be able to operate with impunity in plain sight in any part of this country.

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-05-17/debates/F3016C6F-117C-4328-9793-B88CD763BA41/AntisemiticAttacks>

*A video of the antisemitic incident that is the subject of the above question and answer session can be seen at*

<https://twitter.com/gunnerpunner/status/1393920559243829248>

*The CST report referred to above can be read at*

<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/e/2/Unsafe%20Search%20Report.1620727269.pdf>

*The report from Sara Khan, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963156/CCE\\_Operating\\_with\\_Impunity\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963156/CCE_Operating_with_Impunity_Accessible.pdf)

## House of Commons Written Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

### **Universities: Counter-terrorism**

**Sarah Owen (Labour) [1204]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Prevent strategy on free speech on university campuses.

### **Universities: Freedom of Speech**

**Sarah Owen (Labour) [1205]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions officials in his Department have had with (a) East and (b) South East Asian students regarding freedom of speech on university campuses.

**Sarah Owen (Labour) [1206]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of Muslim student groups regarding freedom of speech on university campuses.

**Michelle Donelan:** The government is clear that the Prevent Duty should not be used to suppress free speech. It requires providers, when exercising their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. There is no prescription from the government, or the Office for Students (OfS), in regard to what action providers should take once they have had due regard. The legislation imposing the Prevent duty in relation to higher education specifically requires that providers must have particular regard to their duty to ensure freedom of speech and to the importance of academic freedom.

In the most recent published assessment by the OfS on implementation of the

Prevent programme in the English higher education sector in 2019, they found no cause for concern that free speech was being undermined by Prevent in external speakers' policies and their implementation. The assessment is available here:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/prevent-review-meetings-programme-findings/>

The government also remains committed to an Independent Review of Prevent, which is why William Shawcross was appointed on 26 January 2021 as the new Independent Reviewer. The call for evidence for the Independent Review was reopened on the 24 March 2021 and will close on the 26 May 2021. The review will look at how effective the statutory Prevent duty is and will make recommendations for the future.

The department has carried out structured discussions at all stages of the policy development leading up to the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill, including student engagement through the National Union of Students and roundtables with students' unions. The department welcomes further discussions and will continue to proactively engage stakeholders with a wide range of interests and backgrounds during and after passage of the Bill, including Muslim, East Asian and South East Asian students. The department plans to meet with Muslim organisations, as well as other stakeholders, in the next few weeks and looks forward to discussing the Bill measures in detail.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-13/1204>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-13/1205>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-13/1206>

*The call for evidence referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-review-of-prevent-call-for-evidence>

*Information about the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

## House of Lords Oral Answers

### Anti-Semitic Attacks

***The statement given in the Commons by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government was repeated in the Lords ([see above](#)).***

**col 450 Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town (Labour):** My Jewish 97 year-old aunt Rose lives in St John's Wood. I never imagined I would see such scenes on her street. As Simon Wiesenthal said, "For evil to flourish, it only requires good men to do nothing."

And Pastor Niemöller wrote: "First they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew."

Does the Minister agree that each and every one of us must stand up to, and speak out against, what we saw at the weekend?

**The Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Lord Greenhalgh):** I completely agree that we must stand in solidarity with British Jews. The events we saw in the past week were abhorrent and I am pleased the police acted swiftly to arrest four individuals for that offence of driving up and down Finchley Road. Equally, there was the violent attack on Rabbi Rafi Goodwin in Chigwell, and I am pleased to say that the latest news is that the police have arrested two individuals concerning that incident.

**Baroness Ludford (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, it is poignant that today's exchange

on anti-Semitism coincides with the important Jewish festival of Shavuot, which has kept some of our colleagues away from this debate. One of the examples that accompanies the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism, is “Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.”

Can the Minister tell the House what steps the Government are taking to ensure that all public and private bodies adopt not only the definition but also the examples? Can the Government stress at every opportunity that the supposedly pro-Palestinian demonstrations of recent days have actually been pro-Hamas, and not in support of the Palestinian people?

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Lords, this Government are very proud of the fact that they were the first adopters of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition, and we are working very hard to ensure that that is fully embedded across our universities and local councils ... It is important that we take that forward and we will continue to work very hard to ensure that we tackle anti-Semitism wherever we see it.

*col 451* **Lord Pickles (Conservative):** ... The Jew haters and the women-despising thugs who threatened murder and sexual violence on our streets brought great shame to our nation. At the first chance, they exposed the thin veneer between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. ... Does [the Minister] agree that we cannot allow the men of violence to define the relationship between communities? Will he commit to measures that combine strict policing and a strong social cohesion? ...

**Lord Greenhalgh:** ... We need to combine that strict policing, where we do more than engage and the police act to ensure that we take the hate off our streets and online wherever it occurs, with an equally strong and robust approach to social cohesion. ...

**The Lord Bishop of Manchester:** Is the Minister aware that the Union of Jewish Students has raised serious concerns that Jewish students and societies are now being targeted with really quite disgusting anti-Semitic abuse due to the conflict in the Middle East? Will he reassure Jewish students that the Government will clamp down on all forms of campus anti-Semitism and encourage all universities not just to adopt but to implement the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism?

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Lords, we are aware of this tension. The Community Security Trust has reported a massive spike in anti-Semitic incidents, but equally, Tell MAMA has seen a similar increase in anti-Muslim incidents of 420% in the past week. ...

**Lord Pannick (Crossbench):** ... [The Minister] knows that anti-Semitism is not confined to appalling attacks on a rabbi in Chigwell and threats to Jewish women in north London. The IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, to which the Minister referred a few moments ago, gives as an example applying double standards by requiring the State of Israel to behave in a way not expected of any other democratic nation. Does the Minister accept that there have been many examples of those double standards in the past week, particularly by broadcasters, and that this more subtle form of anti-Semitism contributes to an atmosphere in which the cruder forms breed?

*col 452* **Lord Greenhalgh:** My Lords, my right honourable friend in the other House talked about how sometimes anti-Zionism is a subtler form of anti-Semitism. We need to root out even those most subtle of forms absolutely and ensure that we take these forms of anti-Semitism away from both the internet and the streets of our big cities.

**Lord Triesman (Labour):** Just a couple of days ago and less than half a mile from my home, a motor convoy with loudhailers passed by calling for Jews to be killed and our daughters raped. ... I abhor Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. No decent safe society can live with either. ... What discussions have the Government held with the many law-abiding Muslim groups to encourage public expression of their anger and repudiation of the hatred

of Jews? What concrete additional help can be given to the Community Security Trust to enhance community protection?

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Lords, we continue to have our cross-government working groups to tackle both anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim sentiments. ...

**Lord Carlile of Berriew (Crossbench):** ... For the sake of Holocaust survivors, such as my beloved sister, and the whole of the community, can we ensure that once prosecutions are brought, they are brought quickly and not delayed? Will the Government call on the Director of Public Prosecutions to account to the Government for the speedy way in which these cases should be processed?

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Lords, I cannot talk about specific cases, but equally, justice delayed is justice denied. We need to see swift and sure justice in these matters.

**Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale (Labour):** My Lords, does the Minister understand that while all decent people in the United Kingdom disapprove of anti-Semitism and find it abhorrent, there is particular resonance for the Jewish community in what was happening on the streets of London just a few days ago? In the 1930s, that is exactly the kind of thing that proved to be a precursor to a Holocaust. Does the Minister agree that it behoves all of us, not just the police and the judiciary, but those of us in this and the other House and journalists, to take the utmost caution in the language we use to describe events in the Middle East just now so that we do not inadvertently inflame the fires of anti-Semitism?

*col 453* **Lord Greenhalgh:** My Lords, I completely agree with those sentiments. We need to react and enforce robustly, but equally to find the right tone to cover these sorts of events.

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-05-18/debates/CF994799-2656-489F-85C3-2E6F1D6F34C5/Anti-SemiticAttacks>

## Downing Street

**Boris Johnson:** There is no place for antisemitism in our society. Ahead of Shavuot, I stand with Britain's Jews who should not have to endure the type of shameful racism we have seen today.

<https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1393944401504874502>

## Home Office

**Priti Patel:** This is disgusting antisemitism. There is no place for this hatred in the UK. I expect @metpoliceuk to be taking this seriously.

*includes video of the incident*

<https://twitter.com/pritipatel/status/1393946139632840705>

## Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

**Robert Jenrick:** This, on the streets of London is deeply disturbing. Vile, criminal hatred like this must not be tolerated.

*includes video of the incident*

<https://twitter.com/RobertJenrick/status/1393933612987428872>

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Dominic Raab:** It is disgusting and disgraceful, and there can be no place for it in our society.

<https://twitter.com/DominicRaab/status/1393934131508166658>

**James Cleverly:** The video of anti Semitic abuse being shouted from cars in North London is vile and unacceptable. There is no excuse, rationale, or justification for this kind of behaviour. Never has been, never will be. I'm glad that @metpoliceuk have committed to take action.

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1393966499388403721>

## House of Lords Library

**Letter from Baroness Berridge to Lord Polak regarding the Trustees of JW3 establishing the first PRU (Pupil referral unit) within the Jewish Community**

[http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0415/Baroness Berridge to Lord Polak.pdf](http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0415/Baroness_Berridge_to_Lord_Polak.pdf)

## Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

**COVID-19: Updated guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

## Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England

**COVID-19: updated guidance for arranging or attending a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

## Department for Education

**Enforcement letter to Talmud Torah Yetev Lev**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/835916/TTYL\\_enforcement\\_letter\\_Apr19.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835916/TTYL_enforcement_letter_Apr19.pdf)

TOP

## Israel

*See also Commons written answer 296 "Durban Conference: 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary", included in the Foreign Affairs section below.*

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Arms Trade: Israel

**Hilary Benn (Labour)** [66] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the use of UK arms exported to Israel; and whether she plans to review the licensing of such exports.

**Ranil Jayawardena:** HM Government continues to monitor closely the situation in Israel. We have procedures in place to review licences – and suspend or revoke as necessary – when circumstances require. We consider all our export applications thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework and keep all licences under careful and continual review as standard procedure.

HM Government takes its export responsibilities seriously and will continue to assess all export licences in accordance with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 'Consolidated Criteria'). HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/66>

### Israel: Gaza

**Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat)** [426] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether Israeli F-35 aircrafts, of which each plane includes a 15 per cent UK work share, are being used in the air strikes on Gaza; and what steps he has taken to determine whether planes being used in the air strikes in Gaza include UK components.

**James Cleverly:** The ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop. We urge all parties to de-escalate. Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. All UK arms export licences are assessed thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework and we keep all licences under careful and continual review as standard.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/426>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Clive Betts (Labour)** [615] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to make representations to his Israeli counterpart on holding criminal investigations into the reported death of children as a result of Israeli police and military personnel actions.

**James Cleverly:** The UK has been clear that we need an immediate de-escalation on all sides, and an end to targeting of civilian populations. The UK offers our condolences to the families of those civilians killed. Civilian deaths, both in Israel and Gaza are a tragedy.

Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties.

We call on all sides to reduce tensions, restore calm and avoid provocation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/615>

### Jerusalem: Palestinians

**Sam Tarry (Labour)** [525] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will condemn the storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound by Israeli forces, including (a) the attack on worshippers and (b) threatened evictions of

Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah.

**James Cleverly:** Violence against worshippers of whatever faith is unacceptable. It is important that policing is particularly sensitive around religious holy sites in Jerusalem, and particularly so during religious festivals like the holy month of Ramadan. We remain concerned over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions, which in all but the most exceptional cases are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/525>

*The following four questions all received the same answer*

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Diana Johnson (Labour)** [139] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department plans to take in response to recent increased levels of unrest between Palestinians and Israelis.

**Sam Tarry (Labour)** [934] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to deescalate the growing conflict in the Gaza Strip.

**Sam Tarry (Labour)** [935] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will condemn the violence in Gaza.

**Sam Tarry (Labour)** [936] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will condemn the actions of the Israeli military in Gaza in response to the recent deaths of 28 Palestinians.

**James Cleverly:** The ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop. Every effort must be made to avoid loss of life, especially that of children. The Prime Minister has called for an urgent de-escalation of tensions. The Foreign Secretary delivered messages of de-escalation in calls to Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 16 May, and Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 12 May. I spoke to the Israeli Ambassador and Palestinian Head of Mission in London on 11 May to urge them to de-escalate and restore calm and reiterate our position on this issue. We have also engaged the UN Security Council, calling for measures to reduce further violence. UK embassies throughout the Middle East are engaging regional partners, and we remain in close contact with the US administration and European allies.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/139>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/934>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/935>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/936>

#### **Jerusalem: Religious Buildings**

**Lyn Brown (Labour)** [661] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterparts on the entry of armed Israeli police into the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

**James Cleverly:** The Foreign Secretary delivered messages of de-escalation in calls to Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 16 May, and Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 12 May. I spoke to the Israeli Ambassador and Palestinian Head of Mission in London on 11 May to urge them to de-escalate and restore calm and reiterate our position on this issue.

The UK is clear that the violence against peaceful worshippers at the al-Aqsa mosque was unacceptable. Attacks on peaceful worshippers must stop. We call on

all sides to reduce tensions, restore calm and avoid provocation. Violence against peaceful worshippers of any faith is unacceptable. Respect for the historic Status Quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem is important at all times, especially during religious festivals such as Ramadan. Our priority now is to secure an immediate de-escalation on all sides.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/661>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Lyn Brown (Labour) [653]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to prevent escalation of the recent violence in (a) Israel and (b) the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

#### **Israel: Violence**

**Lyn Brown (Labour) [654]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to prevent an escalation of intercommunal violence in Israel.

**James Cleverly:** The ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop. Every effort must be made to avoid loss of life, especially that of children. The Prime Minister has called for an urgent de-escalation of tensions. The Foreign Secretary delivered a message of de-escalation in his calls to Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 16 May, and with Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 12 May. I spoke to the Israeli Ambassador and to the Palestinian Head of Mission in London on the 11 May to urge them to de-escalate and restore calm. We have also engaged the UN Security Council, calling for measures to reduce further violence. UK embassies throughout the Middle East are engaging regional partners, and we remain in close contact with the US administration and European allies. We call on all sides to reduce tensions, restore calm and avoid provocation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/653>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/654>

#### **Jerusalem: Armed Conflict**

**Abena Opong-Asare (Labour) [507]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the situation in East Jerusalem; and if he will make a statement.

**James Cleverly:** The ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop. We call on all sides to reduce tensions, restore calm and avoid provocation. The Prime Minister has called for an urgent de-escalation of tensions. The Foreign Secretary delivered a message of de-escalation in his calls to Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 16 May, and with Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 12 May. We have also engaged the UN Security Council, calling for measures to reduce further violence.

As the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made clear, this cycle of violence must stop, and every effort must be made to avoid loss of life. We urge all sides to refrain from any kind of provocation so that calm is restored as quickly as possible. The UK will continue to support that goal.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/507>

#### **Jerusalem: Religious Buildings**

**Sarah Owen (Labour) [479]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recent incident at the al-Aqsa mosque, Jerusalem.

**James Cleverly:** The ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop. We call on all sides to reduce tensions, restore calm and avoid provocation. Violence against peaceful worshippers of any faith is unacceptable. Respect for the historic status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem is important at all times, especially during religious festivals such as Ramadan. Our priority now is to secure an immediate de-escalation on all sides.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/479>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Sam Tarry (Labour) [526]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he will take to pressure the Israeli Government to end the eviction of Palestinians from their homes and adhere to international law.

#### **Jerusalem: Palestinians**

**Lyn Brown (Labour) [655]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the proposed eviction of Palestinian residents from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood.

**James Cleverly:** The UK regularly raises forced evictions of Palestinians from property with the Government of Israel. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace.

I publicised on the 8 May outlining our concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions. UK Officials at the British Embassy in Tel Aviv continue to raise the issue regularly with the Israeli Authorities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/526>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/655>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1391028309618839557>

#### **Israel: Sheikh Jarrah**

**Sarah Owen (Labour) [480]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the obligations of that country under international law in respect of the planned evictions of Palestinian refugee families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood.

**James Cleverly:** We regularly make clear our concerns about the evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem. I spoke to the Israeli Ambassador and to the Palestinian Head of Mission in London on the 11 May, to urge them to de-escalate, restore calm and to reiterate our position on this issue. I tweeted on the 8 May outlining our concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions, which in all but the most exceptional cases are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/480>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [75]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli

counterpart on the prosecution of Palestinian children by Israeli military courts.

**James Cleverly:** We repeatedly 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, including the treatment of Palestinian children. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised the issue of Palestinian children in detention on 19 March with the Israeli Ministry of Defence.

We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/75>

### **Said Odeh**

**Clive Betts (Labour) [614]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will (a) raise with his Israeli counterpart the death of Said Odeh and (b) seek assurance that there will be a criminal investigation into his death.

**James Cleverly:** We are aware of the reports surrounding the death of Said Odeh. Officials from the British Embassy Tel Aviv raised the case with the Israeli Ministry of Defence on 7 May. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we continue to urge Israel to ensure that its investigations are transparent, swift and comprehensive. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-12/614>

### **Palestinians: Coronavirus**

**Fleur Anderson (Labour) [494]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on ensuring access to covid-19 vaccines in the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

**James Cleverly:** The British Embassy Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General Jerusalem are in regular contact with the parties and will continue to raise the issue of timely access to vaccines. The UK is committed to global equitable access to effective vaccines as demonstrated by our £548 million contribution to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) - the international initiative to support global equitable access to vaccines. We are pleased that the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) were among the first to benefit from the COVAX scheme with delivery of over 61,000 doses that arrived on 17 March. A second shipment of 72,000 doses from COVAX arrived in the OPTs on 19 April with more due later in May.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/494>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Jamie Stone (Liberal Democrat) [1165]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Human Rights Watch report entitled A threshold crossed on Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

**James Cleverly:** We are aware of the Human Rights Watch report released on 27 April and will review the findings.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-13/1165>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

[https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-  
apartheid-and-persecution](https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution)

## UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Grahame Morris (Labour) [55] Attacks on journalists in Gaza** – That this House deplores the attack by the Israeli military on the building in Gaza housing media including Associated Press and Al Jazeera, which follows attacks or detentions of at least thirty journalists and two previous strikes on journalist's offices in Gaza; supports the demands of the International Federation of Journalists for an end to the deliberate and systematic targeting of media and journalists in a clear attempt to silence those reporting from on the ground in Gaza; further condemns recent attacks on Israeli journalists by settler groups in Gaza; notes that Israel is in breach of its international obligations, specifically UN Security Council Resolution 1738 which requires States to protect journalists and their support staff working in conflict environments; and calls on the UK Government to do everything in its power, including via the United Nations, to press the Israeli authorities to end the impunity for attacks on journalists in Gaza.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58484>

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Dominic Raab:** Today I spoke to Jordanian Foreign Minister @AymanHsafadi to discuss how we can work together to end violence in Israel & the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Jordan is a custodian of the Holy Sites and a key UK partner in the region.

<https://twitter.com/DominicRaab/status/1394355419494109186>

**Dominic Raab:** 1. The UK condemns Hamas's attacks on civilians, and affirms Israel's right to self-defence - which must be exercised with proportionality. We oppose settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and the evictions in Jerusalem.

<https://twitter.com/DominicRaab/status/1393981384427978758>

**Dominic Raab:** 2. All sides must avoid civilian casualties. Above all, we need to see de-escalation, an end to violence & a political pathway to peace.

<https://twitter.com/DominicRaab/status/1393981386466471940>

### **The cycle of violence must end for Israelis and Palestinians alike:**

#### **Statement by Ambassador Barbara Woodward, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the UNSC Open Debate on the situation in the Middle East**

Mr President, the ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop.

This week has seen the worst violence Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories have experienced for several years. I repeat my Prime Minister's call that both sides step back from the brink and show restraint. This cycle of violence must end.

The UK offers our deepest condolences to the families of those civilians killed. Each one of those deaths is a tragedy.

Mr President, we are deeply concerned that the current trajectory in Gaza will only lead to further violence and more civilian casualties. We want to see an urgent cessation of hostilities and calm restored. We value the continued UN, Egyptian and Qatari efforts to broker a ceasefire and improve the humanitarian situation. We urge the parties to work with mediators, to cease hostilities and prevent further humanitarian impact.

Let me be unequivocal, Mr President: the UK condemns the firing of rockets at civilian populations. There is no justification for targeting civilians. The death toll seen in the last week is unacceptable, and the images we have all seen are truly harrowing.

We strongly condemn these acts of terrorism from Hamas and other terrorist groups, who must permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against Israel and Israeli civilians.

Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that Israel makes every effort to avoid civilian casualties. We are gravely concerned by UN reports that medical installations, 23 schools, over 500 houses in Gaza, and buildings housing media organisations have been destroyed or seriously damaged. Israel's actions must be proportionate and in line with International Humanitarian Law. We are also concerned by reports that Hamas is again using civilian infrastructure and populations as cover for its operations.

Mr President, we hold this special session of the Council today during the holy days of Eid, and as we approach the Jewish festival of Shavuot.

The UK is clear, Mr President, that violence against peaceful worshippers is unacceptable and must stop. The right to freedom of worship must be upheld.

The historic Status Quo in Jerusalem is important at all times, but especially during religious festivals. We continue to support the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's important role as custodian of the holy sites.

Mr President, let me also reiterate that the UK has made its positions on evictions, demolitions, and the settlement enterprise clear in this Council, and I will do so again today. We oppose these activities. Settlements are illegal under international law, and an obstacle to peace. We urge the Government of Israel to cease its policies related to settlement expansion immediately, and instead work towards the establishment of a Palestinian state along 1967 lines, with its capital in East Jerusalem.

Mr President, the situation on the ground demonstrates the urgent need to make progress towards peace. The UK remains committed to the two-state solution as the best way to permanently end the occupation and bring peace and stability to the region. We urge all sides to show maximum restraint and refrain from taking actions which endanger civilians and make peace more difficult.

These next hours and days are critical, Mr President. The United Kingdom will continue to do all it can to bring an end to this violence and work towards a more peaceful future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-cycle-of-violence-must-end-for-israelis-and-palestinians-alike>

## Scottish Parliament Motion

**Jackson Carlaw (Conservative) [S6M-00034] Israel's Right of Self-defence and a Call for De-escalation in Current Hostilities** – That the Parliament expresses its profound concern at the continuing violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories; agrees that the events of recent days must be brought to a swift end, with a full focus on preventing further loss of life; unequivocally condemns the reported actions of Hamas, and what it sees as other terrorist organisations, for the launching and targeting of missiles at Israel; believes that the firing of rockets towards Israel must permanently cease; understands that Israel is currently experiencing large-scale attacks aimed entirely at civilian population centres across the country; acknowledges reports that the Israel Defense Forces are seeking to neutralise what it considers terrorist targets in Gaza directly linked to the rocket fire on Israel's cities and citizens, and understands that this response is, so far as is possible in such a situation, being carried out in a measured manner and underpinned by unequivocal intelligence information; considers that Israel has a right of self-defence and to protect the country and its people from attack; acknowledges that, as part of the nation's self-defence, it is imperative for Israel's actions to be proportionate, in conjunction with international humanitarian law and with all steps taken to prevent civilian casualties; believes that the existing situation demonstrates that urgent action needs to be taken in order to bring about an immediate ceasefire, a sustainable peace and a two-state solution, which it considers remains the best way forward to secure these goals and

achieve wider stability in the Middle East; calls on all sides in the conflict to exercise the highest possible levels of restraint and avoid taking further actions that put civilians at risk and which also exacerbate the difficulties involved with securing a lasting peace settlement in the region; considers that events taking place in either Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories must not be used as a justification for verbal or physical attacks and intimidation against Jewish people living in Scotland, and unreservedly condemns any such incidents. <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-00034>

## Senedd Statement of Opinion

**John Griffiths (Labour) [OPIN-2021-0201] Stop the conflict between Israel and Palestine** – This Senedd:

1. Notes grave concern at the conflict and loss of life in Palestine and Israel.
2. Calls for an immediate ceasefire and cessation of hostilities given the level of loss of life in Gaza.
3. Believes the overwhelming military strength of Israel carries responsibility to exercise greater restraint.
4. Supports renewed talks and negotiations to achieve an enduring peace and lasting solution to the longstanding conflict.

<https://record.senedd.wales/StatementOfOpinion/201>

## Northern Ireland Assembly Matter of the Day

### Breaches of International Law in Palestine by Israel

**12.15 Emma Sheerin (Sinn Féin):** ... As inhabitants of the world and members of the human race, an injustice against any of us is an injustice against us all. That is what is happening.

A few weeks ago, I sat in the Chamber in complete disbelief as Sinn Féin and Gerry Carroll were the only Members not to support the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of "antisemitism", which says that it is antisemitic to criticise the Israeli state. It is not antisemitic to criticise the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which is in contravention of the Geneva Convention. Those people have to acquire a permit to move around their own homeland and are denied access to basic utilities. The most recent violence erupted following further forced evictions in east Jerusalem. Missiles were fired on a mosque as people were inside. It is ethnic cleansing.

Reports tell us that almost 220 people have been killed over the past week, 209 of whom were Palestinians. The Gaza Strip is smaller than County Louth; 58 children have been murdered there this week, 40,000 people have been displaced from their homes and a building housing international media has been bombed into extinction. ... We, in the North of Ireland, know what colonialism does to people and what human rights abuses do to communities, but you do not have to know that to know right from wrong. We all must stand against the war crimes of the Israeli state.

**William Humphrey (DUP):** ... In the debate in the House two weeks ago, I said that Northern Ireland politicians need to be very careful about the language that they use about the Middle East. Sadly, the words and actions of some Northern Ireland politicians over the last few days have inflamed the situation, and I will come to that later in my contribution. The first duty of any Government is to protect their people. We, in Northern Ireland, know only too well what happens when a Government fail to protect their people here and on the mainland. Attacking civilians, civilian installations and targets is wrong no matter who

the perpetrator is. There are appalling scenes on both sides not least the attack on the Magen David Adom (MDA) ambulance service and its personnel over the last number of days. That is simply wrong.

Hamas terrorists need to stop using innocent people as shields, which is something that has been going on for some time. ... I visited Israel in 2018. We visited Ramallah and spoke at first hand to representatives of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people in Gaza are absolutely terrorised by Hamas, an organisation that will not allow elections to take place. ...

The violence must end. Does the House know that Hamas means violence in Hebrew? As I said, Hamas terrorised the Muslim Palestinian population. They are radical Islamic terrorists. Its leaders call for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews. Of course, it wants the destruction of the state of Israel from the mountains of Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

... we need to be careful about the language that we use. Statements and images over the last number of days here have led to Jewish-owned businesses in Belfast and Londonderry being attacked over the weekend: that is simply unacceptable. Our small Jewish community in Northern Ireland is very fearful. They are citizens of Northern Ireland; they are not spokesmen or representatives of the Israeli Government ...

**12.30 Matthew O'Toole (SDLP):** ... The images on our screens from Gaza in recent days have been nothing short of horrifying. I send my solidarity and that of my party to those experiencing violence in Gaza.

... there is a deep asymmetry between the state of Israel — particularly the state of Israel led by the Government of Benjamin Netanyahu — and the Palestinian people who live in appalling conditions in Gaza. Gaza has 2 million people living in an area that is not much bigger than the Ards peninsula. They have poor medical care and are deprived of much basic infrastructure. While there can be no justification for the actions of Hamas and the firing of rockets — that is unacceptable and not a way to get justice or resolution for the Palestinian people — it is true to say that the actions and conduct of the Government of Benjamin Netanyahu have been not only irresponsible but unacceptable.

What we need to see is, first, a de-escalation, and, secondly, after more than a decade in government, Benjamin Netanyahu and his Government returning to the table and getting serious about a deal that secures peace, justice and security for all communities in the Middle East. That will mean a return to the borders of 1967, as set out in international law and UN treaties and resolutions. ... while it is important that we condemn rockets being fired into Israel and that we offer condolences and solidarity to people who are experiencing that violence, we cannot turn a blind eye to the extraordinary violence that is being meted out to innocent people in Gaza. We know that around 200 people, half of them women and children, have been killed in recent days. We cannot simply turn a blind eye to that and ignore it. ...

I say this to those who are protesting, legitimately, here: continue to protest legitimately and make your voices clear, but it is absolutely unacceptable that any violence or ... graffiti should be targeted at members of our Jewish community. ...

**Steve Aiken (UUP):** ... we should be condemning all violence. In matters of international law, it should be clear that firing rockets against civilian targets undermines the Geneva and Hague conventions. ...

When we in the Northern Ireland Assembly debate this, there are issues that we should be taking to the forefront. The first issue is the degree of antisemitism that has been shown in Northern Ireland. That should not be happening. We should be condemning it completely. At the weekend, we saw disgraceful scenes in London of people going through the streets of an area that is predominantly occupied by people from the Jewish community. Can you imagine what would have happened if that had happened in areas occupied by the Irish community, and people had been using similar language about Irish people, or if it had happened in a Muslim community? It is completely unacceptable. I

notice that Members across the Chamber seem to think that there is some kind of amusement about this. There is no amusement about this. Antisemitism must be completely pushed away. We should not have it in our society, under any circumstances. However, there is a further issue. We should be critical and clear about Hamas and the role that it has had. Each rocket fired by Hamas probably costs about \$200 to \$300, or even several thousand dollars. That is money that should be going to support medicines and economic development in the Gaza Strip, but none of that is happening. Instead, they are using that money to buy rockets that they fire at civilian targets. ... Hamas is supported by Iran. ...

We should stop focussing on one area and realise the entire disaster that is happening across the Middle East — in Yemen, Iraq and Syria — and what Hezbollah and Hamas are doing. ...

**Paula Bradshaw (Alliance):** ... Accountability for the needless deaths and destruction over the last few weeks lies squarely with the Israeli Government. It goes without saying, but I will underline that the Israeli Government do not reflect the views, values and actions of all people living in Israel and certainly not all of the Jewish people, just as Hamas does not speak for all Palestinians. I echo the comments from other members in the condemnation of attacks on the Jewish people living in Northern Ireland.

The current Government of Israel have intentionally accelerated the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, cited hatred against Palestinians and normalised settler violence. They have set the context for the current crisis. Occupying and destroying Palestinian land is illegal and abhorrent. ... We are witnessing, from the Israeli Government, a form of ethnic cleansing, enabled by discriminatory Israeli law ... The escalation of violence is a direct result of those actions, and the extent of the violence is unspeakable and unjustifiable. I reject arguments of self-defence, that air raids are OK because advance warnings and alarms are given, and that the killing of innocent children is justified due to Hamas using civilians as human shields. There is no justification for the horror inflicted on Palestinians by the Israeli Government.

I condemn rocket fire and mortars from Hamas and other groups into Israeli civilian areas. That constitutes a war crime. We must be clear, however, that there is no equivalence between this violence and that of an incredibly powerful occupying state. The Israeli Government are carrying out ethnic cleansing and collective punishment against an already oppressed people. ... Genuine peace can only be achieved with the full realisation of Palestinian rights and the end of Israel's systemic discrimination against Palestinians in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. ...

**Rachel Woods (Green):** ... More than 50 children have been killed, and the death toll sits at nearly 200. Every effort must be made to end all attacks and forms of aggression, address the underlying causes and hold those responsible fully accountable. De-escalation and a route to peace can only be achieved with the full realisation of Palestinian rights and the end of Israel's systematic discrimination against Palestinians in Israel and occupied Palestine. ...

Words are fine, but making public statements without action is meaningless. This is not the first escalation of tension and violence. It is not the first time we have witnessed the senseless and horrific murder of people. The violence is following patterns that we have seen before, reminiscent of the horrific hostilities in 2008, 2012 and 2014.

There must be full compliance with international law and a genuine peace process, otherwise people will continue to suffer while the international community's attention is elsewhere. ...

**Jim Allister (Traditional Unionist Voice):** ... As a small state, Northern Ireland knows what it is like to be subjected to perpetual terrorist attacks over many years. When I listen to the debate, I wonder what people expect Israel to do when it is subjected to 3,000 rocket attacks. What is Israel meant to do? Sit back and take it? ... Any sovereign state has an

absolute right to defend itself when it is subject to attack like that ...

I note that, when she was making her opening remarks on the topic, the Member who brought it to the House did not have one word of criticism about the firing of 3,000 rockets and more by Hamas. We were told about the poverty of Gaza, which cannot be gainsaid, but Hamas authorities obviously prioritise the acquisition of thousands of rockets over dealing with the socio-economic issues in that area. Instead of investing in those issues, they would rather invest in rockets. ...

**Gerry Carroll (People Before Profit Alliance):** What has happened over the last week in particular is disgraceful and has shown the world what the Israeli state represents and what it is all about. This past weekend, al-Nakba was commemorated by Palestinians. That was 73 years ago. They refer to it as the catastrophe, and it was the founding of the Israeli state. That state was built on settler colonialism, ethnic cleansing, forced displacement and violence to name but a few of its issues. It now practises apartheid. Israel is an apartheid state. It is not just a bad state or a state that does bad things: it is an apartheid state. ...

Home-made rockets are no match for F-16 jet fighters. Israelis can seek shelter, but Palestinians have absolutely nowhere to hide. Israeli settlers have the best infrastructure in the region, and they have a nuclear state. Palestinians are subjected to absolute poverty and misery as a result of what Israel is doing.

12.45 It is shameful that the Member for North Belfast tries to insinuate, as he has done before, that Palestinian protests in Belfast have led to an increase in antisemitic attacks. It is deplorable, inaccurate and very, very dangerous, and he has no evidence of it whatsoever. People across the world, including Muslim people, Jewish people, Christian people, secular people and many others, are standing against Israel because it is an occupier, an aggressor and an apartheid state. ...

The Members opposite who expressed faux concern about Hamas and its role in the oppression of Palestinians should open their eyes. Look at the slaughter being carried out by Israel. Look at the occupation. Look at the checkpoints. Open your eyes.

Solidarity to the Palestinians. In our thousands and in our millions, we are all Palestinians. Victory to the intifada. Expel the Israeli ambassador from Ireland.

**Jonathan Buckley (DUP):** ... I have seen, on recent visits to Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the horror of the situation faced by both sides. The living conditions of many innocent Israeli civilians, including children and women, along that border have not been mentioned. They have to live within a minute of a bomb shelter because of indiscriminate missile attacks from Hamas. I have seen the terror tunnels that Hamas ruthlessly uses to cross to take innocent Israelis to their death in extreme circumstances. I have seen them, and there needs to be recognition that this is a difficult situation. From many on the Benches opposite, however, there is constant condemnation of the Israeli state and denial of its right to existence, but surely an apt starting point is for them to realise the situation in which those people live.

I hope that, in the days to come, there can be intense dialogue leading to a peaceful resolution in the Middle East, but that starts with a simple recognition of the state of Israel's right to existence. ...

The small Jewish community in Northern Ireland feels vulnerable right now. Graves have been attacked, their businesses have been disrupted, and they have received threatening messages. It is time that we put our arms around our Jewish community in Northern Ireland, which has lived peacefully in this country for many years and plays a vital role in its vibrancy, particularly in Belfast. ...

**Colin McGrath (SDLP):** ... The Israeli military launched another series of air raids on the Gaza Strip early this morning ... The fact that some have stated that the murder of 58 children is in some way acceptable as a means of defence absolutely sickens me to my core. It absolutely sickens me that somebody could stand in this place and say that there

is any justification for the murder of 58 children. ...

Kofi Annan once said: "*A genocide begins with the killing of one man — not for what he has done, but because of who he is.*"

Genocide begins with the denial of a person's very humanity. What is happening in Palestine is a genocide. If we stand by and do not condemn this action totally and unequivocally, it begs the question as to what the House will stand for. ... Sometimes, it is not enough to stand in solidarity. The current death and destruction call for action. The genocide must stop, and the international community must condemn it and seek a peaceful resolution in which no more families or children in Palestine will go to sleep with the fear that they will never wake up.

**Daniel McCrossan (SDLP):** ... it is dreadful to stand here today and witness a despicable debate of "go compare", when 58 children have been bombed and blown to pieces in their own communities and are under threat from a state that has occupied their land, deprived them of basic utilities and left them in poverty.

Some Members defend that action because it is the state's right to defend itself. ... The state of Israel is wrong.

One life lost is one too many. Fifty-eight children. Listen to those who defended that today in the words of "go compare". It is totally shocking. Two hundred and twenty people have been killed. Bombs. Heavy artillery. Bombs are blowing homes apart and forcing people from where they live and who have nowhere to go. Can you imagine the fear? Imagine the fear under which those people are living. There are people in the House who cannot even stand together to condemn the murder of innocent people. ... There is no right answer, but it is time for the international community to step in and to take action. The whole world is watching and is united in its disgust at what is happening and in its horror at innocent children and people being blown to bits. ...

*"Tonight, I put the kids to sleep in our bedroom. So that when we die, we die together and no one would live to mourn the loss of one another."* ... Those are the words of a young mother named Eman in Gaza ...

Over 200 Palestinians are dead, including 58 children and 33 women. More than 1,200 people have been injured. Eight people have been killed in Israel, including a child and a police officer. ... When is the international community going to say, "Enough is enough"? The rocket attacks on Israel are wrong, but Israel's response is completely disproportionate. Israel's violence and discrimination against and attempted erasure of the Palestinian people is appalling. ...

**Gerry Carroll:** ... On a point of order, Mr Speaker. ... Mr Humphrey alleged, or at least insinuated, once again that Palestinian protests in Belfast are leading to a rise in antisemitic attacks in our city ... Everybody here is opposed to antisemitism. Such comments are inaccurate, unfounded and have no basis in evidence. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2021/05/17&docID=337442#3452055>

*The debate about the IHRA definition of antisemitism referred to above can be read at*

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2021/04/27&docID=334490#3414146>

*and continued at*

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2021/04/27&docID=334490#3414349>

### **The TUC stands in solidarity with Palestinian workers**

The TUC stands in solidarity with all Palestinian workers and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions ... This is in condemnation of the Israeli government's violence in Gaza and the planned evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah, and against the illegal occupation of Palestinian land and persistent violations of Palestinian rights. We have long-standing policy in support of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace between Palestine and Israel that is consistent with international law and respects equality and human rights.

The TUC has called on the UK government and international community to take firm action to help stop the escalation of violence, and to stop the evictions from Sheikh Jarrah. We are horrified by reports that to date 200 Palestinians have been killed including 59 children, and 10 Israelis have been killed in the recent violence. ...

We deplore this violence and the deliberate targeting of journalists. According to the National Union of Journalists and International Federation of Journalists, over 30 journalists have been attacked or detained during the current violence and buildings housing media have been destroyed by Israeli bombs, which is seen as a deliberate attempt to silence those reporting on the ground in Gaza.

In solidarity with Palestinian workers, we're calling on the UK government to recognise the root causes of this escalating violence and take steps to encourage a resolution including:

- calling for an end to the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories and the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem,
- calling for an end to the ongoing systematic discrimination faced by Palestinians in Jerusalem and the occupied territories, and forced displacement which is classified as a war crime,
- publicly oppose the persistent violations of international law by the Israeli government including the settlement expansions, and
- recognise the State of Palestine.

We stand in solidarity with Palestinian workers today and every day in their struggle for liberation, independence, equality and justice.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/tuc-stands-solidarity-palestinian-workers>

## **Northern Ireland Committee: Irish Congress of Trade Unions**

### **Congress stands in solidarity with Palestinian people and condemns violence**

... [Congress General Secretary] Patricia King said: "We utterly condemn the violence and the loss of life including those of innocent Israelis. However, the disproportionate attacks by Israel on Gaza have led to the deaths of over 130 Palestinians, including dozens of children. It is heart-breaking to see Palestinian families being thrown out of their homes to make way for Israeli settlers. Yet again, the unjust and illegal occupation of Palestine and the continued and illegal annexation of lands by Israel is the root cause of this ongoing human tragedy."

Yvonne O' Callaghan, Chair, Congress Global Solidarity added: "... We welcome the calling in of the Israeli Ambassador by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, and emphasise that only continued international pressure can make Israel cease its violations of international law and human rights. ..."

Congress will continue to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people until justice, rights, and international law prevail.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ictuni.org/news/2021/05/17/congress-stands-in-solidarity-with-palestinian-peo/>

### **Addressing Security Council, Secretary-General Calls for Immediate End to Fighting between Israel, Palestinians in Gaza, Denounces 'Senseless' Bloodshed**

... The current hostilities are utterly appalling. This latest round of violence only perpetuates the cycles of death, destruction and despair, and pushes farther to the horizon any hopes of coexistence and peace.

Fighting must stop. It must stop immediately. Rockets and mortars on one side and aerial and artillery bombardments on the other must stop. I appeal to all parties to heed this call.

The United Nations is actively engaging all sides towards an immediate ceasefire.

The hostilities have already caused unconscionable death, immense suffering and damage to vital infrastructure. I am appalled by the increasingly large numbers of Palestinian civilian casualties, including many women and children, from Israeli strikes in Gaza. I also deplore Israeli fatalities from rockets launched from Gaza.

I am also deeply concerned by violent clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians across the occupied West Bank, including east Jerusalem, where some Palestinian families are under threat of eviction.

In Israel, violence by vigilante-style groups and mobs has added a further horrendous dimension to an already deteriorating crisis. Leaders on all sides have a responsibility to curb inflammatory rhetoric and calm the rising tensions.

The fighting risks dragging Israelis and Palestinians into a spiral of violence with devastating consequences for both communities and for the entire region. It has the potential to unleash an uncontrollable security and humanitarian crisis and to further foster extremism, not only in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, but in the region as a whole, potentially creating a new locus of dangerous instability.

The hostilities have forced thousands of Palestinians to leave their homes in Gaza and shelter in schools, mosques and other places with limited access to water, food, hygiene or health services. Hospitals are already overstretched due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, Israeli civilians live in fear of rockets launched from Gaza. I am appalled by the attack on a refugee camp in Gaza, in which 10 members of one family were killed. Humanitarian installations must be protected. Journalists must be allowed to work free of fear and harassment. The destruction of media offices in Gaza is extremely concerning.

This senseless cycle of bloodshed, terror and destruction must stop immediately.

All parties must respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The status quo at the holy sites must be upheld and respected. ...

Let me reiterate that the United Nations remains deeply committed to working with Israelis and Palestinians and with our international and regional partners, including the Middle East Quartet, to realize a lasting and just peace. ...

The longer this cycle of violence continues, the more challenging it will be to reach that ultimate goal. Only a negotiated sustainable political solution will end, once and for all, these devastating cycles of violence and lead to a peaceful future for Palestinians and Israelis alike. ...

***To read the full transcript see***

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sqsm20726.doc.htm>

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### **Senseless Cycle of Bloodshed, Destruction between Israel, Palestinians in Gaza Must Stop Now, Secretary-General Tells Security Council**

As fighting between Israel and Palestinians in Gaza broke furiously into its seventh day, foreign ministers in the Security Council today called unequivocally for an immediate end to the bloodshed, sounding alarm bells over the imminent potential for the violence to spill

into the wider region.

In opening remarks, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres described the hostilities as “utterly appalling”. [\[see above for the Secretary-General’s full statement\]](#)

**Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process**, said the past week has seen the deadliest escalation between Israeli military forces and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza in seven years, as well as dramatic scenes of violence across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. ...

According to preliminary numbers, he said, 177 Palestinians and 10 Israelis have been killed by Israeli air strikes and Palestinian militant rockets. Israeli official sources say that Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militants have launched more than 2,900 indiscriminate rockets from Gaza towards Israel. Nine Israelis, including five women and two children, and one Indian national were killed and over 250 injured. Rockets have reached as far as the outskirts of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and its suburbs, and Ben Gurion airport. While a significant number of rockets were intercepted by Iron Dome, 450 fell in built up areas and many others landed short inside Gaza, accounting for Palestinian casualties. ...

In Gaza, he said humanitarian and security conditions are more dire by the day. In response to Palestinian militant rocket attacks that began on 10 May, Israeli defence forces have conducted 950 strikes against what they said were militant targets, including weapons factories and depots, tunnel networks, Hamas training facilities, intelligence and security headquarters and offices and the homes of senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives. According to Israel, those strikes have killed more than 100 operatives, including senior commanders. The civilian death toll also continues to mount, with Gaza health authorities reporting at least 44 children and 31 women killed and 1,200 injured as of this morning. Over 34,000 people have been displaced from their homes. ...

Describing rocket launches by Hamas and other militants from highly populated civilian neighbourhoods into Israeli civilian population centres as a violation of international law that must immediately cease, he stressed that Israel must also abide by the international humanitarian law principles governing armed conflict — including the proportional use of force and exercise of maximum restraint to spare civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of military operations.

... he said that on 13 May, Israeli defence forces reported that three rockets were fired from Lebanon into the sea off the coast of northern Israel. Lebanese Armed Forces confirmed the firing and reported finding of material near a Palestine refugee camp in Rashidiyeh. On 14 May, up to 100 individuals protested north of the Blue Line, some waving Palestinian and Hizbullah flags. The Israeli defence forces fired multiple warning shots, reportedly injuring two, and a Lebanese citizen later died. In addition, three rockets were launched from Syria, with no reports of damage or injuries, and mass protests in solidarity with Palestinians also took place at Israel’s border with Jordan. ...

**Riad Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine**, said there are no words to describe the horrors his people are enduring ...

Each time Israel hears a foreign leader speak of its right to defend itself, it is emboldened to continue murdering families in their sleep. “Israel is killing Palestinians in Gaza, one family at a time,” he said, committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is unapologetic and relentless in pursuing its colonial policies. ...

He likewise questioned what tools the international community is prepared to deploy to ensure Israel’s compliance with its obligations and bring about an end to its occupation — tools it uses regularly in other conflicts: military intervention, sanctions, the suspension of bilateral relations, prosecution of those who commit crimes, or imposition of an arms embargo, among them. He wondered how Israel could believe that its troops, “storming the holiest of sites, Al-Aqsa Mosque, on the holiest of months, Ramadan, and on the holiest of nights, the night of destiny,” would bear no consequence. “We are not two neighbours living side by side in peace,” he assured. He described Israel as an armed thief who has

“entered our house and is terrorizing our family”, claiming a right to security that it denies to Palestinians. Israel is also a nuclear Power with a military arsenal, the Iron Dome and shelters, while Gazans are besieged.

Palestinian civilians need protection, he emphasized, and they deserve compassion, solidarity and action. They are victims of dispossession, forced displacement, discrimination and denial of rights ...

“Jerusalem is not for sale,” he declared. “Our roots are deep,” with Palestinian heritage etched into every stone, street and ally in the city. “War and peace start from Jerusalem.” Saving peace starts with saving Sheikh Jarrah, protecting Al-Haram Al-Sharif from attempts to divide it temporally and spatially. ...

**The representative of Israel** displayed a photo of a 16-year-old Arab girl from Israel, who was murdered on 12 May by the radical terrorist group Hamas. Millions of Israelis have been huddling across Israel to avoid rocket fire. Turning to Council members, he asked: “What would you do if thousands of terrorist rockets were being fired at your country?” ... Explaining that Hamas was frustrated by President Mahmoud Abbas’ decision in April to postpone elections yet again, he said the group deliberately chose to escalate tensions in Jerusalem “as a pretext to start this war”.

Rejecting yet another pretext used by Hamas — accusations of meddling by the Israeli Government in a recent high-profile court case — he declared: “Israel is a country of law, with a robust and independent judiciary.” ... Hamas did not stop there, but instead went on to incite violence on the Temple Mount, as Palestinian extremists turned the Al-Aqsa Mosque into a site to stockpile weapons. ...

For years, he continued, Hamas has built a vast web of underground terror tunnels that snake beneath playgrounds, hospital maternity wards and mosques, all in an effort to drive up civilian casualties when clashes do occur. ... he described Hamas’ attacks — which involve attacking some civilians by hiding behind other civilians — as a “double war crime”. While Israel abides strictly by international law and takes extreme measures to protect civilians, their use by Hamas as human shield can regrettably lead to civilian casualties. Against that backdrop, he warned against efforts to compare Israel and Hamas, stressing that the latter sees every Israeli death as a victory in its antisemitic plan and every Palestinian death as a success in its campaign to evoke international sympathy. ...

**Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan**, said Israel is responsible for the difficult situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories — and everything caused by the bloodshed. ... “The illegitimate practices of Israel must stop.” The Council must act now to protect Palestinians, he said, underscoring the impossibility of maintaining the status quo. ... It is Israel’s responsibility to protect the status quo in Jerusalem, as well as the Arab and Islamic identity of its holy sites. The Council must force Israel to respect Sheikh Jarrah, he said, stressing that, according to international humanitarian law, the inhabitants of East Jerusalem are civilians and should be protected. “We are talking about a war crime,” he said ... The occupation is the source of the conflict. ...

**Sameh Shoukry, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt**, said ... unprecedented confrontations are taking place against worshippers in Jerusalem, including Al-Aqsa Mosque, alongside a systematic policy against Arab citizens in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem. He denounced prevarication around international legal promises, including for serious negotiations on the creation of a Palestinian State decided upon before 1967. Stressing that Israel’s military operation has created victims in Gaza, jeopardizing peace and stability in the region, he said the Council must shoulder its responsibility to bring an end to the conflict and undertake efforts to deescalate the situation so that “everyone can take a deep breath and think about the causes”. The two-State solution is the only means for satisfying all the parties, he said ...

**Wang Yi, State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China** [said] Israel must exercise restraint, stop demolitions and end evictions. Meanwhile, the State of Palestine must avoid steps that escalate the situation and must prevent civilian casualties and work towards a peaceful solution. ...

**Othman Jerandi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad of Tunisia** ... underlined [Tunisia's] firm rejection of Israel's heinous attacks against unarmed Palestinians during the month of Ramadan and its ongoing efforts to change Jerusalem's historic status and demographic makeup. ... "We must not treat victims and the aggressors equally," he warned ...

**Ine Eriksen Søreide, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway**, ... condemned the rocket attacks by Hamas and other groups towards Israeli civilians and urged Israel to ensure proportionality in its response. ... As Jerusalem is sacred to three religions, Israeli authorities have a special duty to safeguard the rights of believers at the holy sites of East Jerusalem, she said ...

**Simon Coveney, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence of Ireland** ... [said] "This is the latest tragic cycle in a conflict whose recurrence shames all of us in the United Nations and the international community," ... He called on all the parties to refrain from violent and provocative acts — including rockets and incendiary devices launched from Gaza into Israel — while calling on the latter to abide by international law, particularly on the protection of civilians, even when acting in self-defence. ...

**The representative of the United States** ... called on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians and to respect international humanitarian law. ... Calling on Hamas and other Palestinian groups in Gaza to halt rocket attacks and other provocations, she expressed concern over intercommunal violence in mixed communities. Parties must avoid actions including incitement, violent attacks, evictions — notably in East Jerusalem — and settlement construction east of the 1967 lines, as well as uphold the historic status quo of the holy sites. ...

**Sergey Vershinin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation**, decisively condemned the use of force and violence against civilians in Israel and Palestine. ... He called on all parties to respect the status quo of holy sites, notably in East Jerusalem, and to consider their highly sensitive nature. He condemned attempts to change the demographic character of East Jerusalem as null and void ... The issue of protecting medical personnel deserves particular attention. Conditions must be created to launch peaceful Palestinian-Israeli dialogue, based on resolutions and the principle of two States living side by side in peace and security. ...

**The representative of the United Kingdom**, stressing that this week has seen the worst violence Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory have experienced for several years, reiterated Prime Minister Boris Johnson's call that both sides must step back from the brink and show restraint. ... [\[See above for the full transcript\]](#)

**The representative of France** expressed support for two States living in peace and security within secure and recognized borders along 4 June 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as a shared capital ... "France will never compromise on Israel's security," he emphasized, recognizing Israel's right to self-defence, which must be exercised with utmost restraint, in strict compliance with international law and international humanitarian law. He expressed grave concern about civilians in Gaza, calling on all parties to ensure aid access and to protect media and humanitarian personnel. ...

**Maged Abdelfattah Abdelaziz, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States** ... [said] the Council must answer critical questions, including whether or not civilian protection rules apply to the Palestinian people as they do to Israeli settlers that flagrantly violate Security Council resolutions. ... Indeed, Israel continues to violate Council resolutions and to attack Palestine and its people, using a manufactured spiral of violence

to capture more Palestinian lands and to implement plans that have already been rejected by Arab States in the region. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14521.doc.htm>

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**Parliamentarians Must Demand Governments Pressure Israel to ‘Stop this Carnage’, Palestinian Rights Committee Hears, amid Calls for Accountability, Justice**

... “Shame on the Security Council,” said **Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine**, speaking at the virtual Forum on International Parliamentary Support to the Question of Palestine ... Even though the Council met several times and there was consensus on the need for a ceasefire, it was unable to say a single official word against the aggression. One country is preventing the Security Council to speak in a unified voice, he said ...

Calling on parliamentarians to demand their Governments pressure Israel to stop the carnage, he highlighted the humanitarian tragedy. More than 50,000 people are displaced in Gaza, he said, adding “they need to eat, they need medicine, they need inoculation against the pandemic, they need blankets, they need the ambulances, they need doctors”. The international community must mobilize assistance to enable Palestinians to deal with the natural catastrophe and the human-made one ...

Voicing alarm about the number of deaths and pointing to the evictions pending in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods, Mr. Mansour said the International Criminal Court must begin investigating Israel’s war crimes. The racist apartheid regime of Israel is attacking everything related to Palestine, he said, and Palestinian people need to be protected. Those who are fixated on Israel’s right to defend itself should remember that Palestinians live under apartheid and discrimination. ...

**Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs**, also spoke at the Forum today, voicing concern about the lost civilian lives, which include children on both sides. ...

Reiterating the Secretary-General’s call on Israel to cease evictions and demolitions, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, she said both parties must urgently de-escalate the dangerous spiral of violence between Israel and Gaza. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/gapal1438.doc.htm>

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**World Food Programme moves to support families affected by Gaza violence**

Responding to rising humanitarian needs brought about by the escalation of conflict in the Gaza Strip, the World Food Programme (WFP) on Monday began providing emergency assistance to support families, amid fears of low food stocks and rising prices.

The cash support from the UN agency, which is working alongside partners, will benefit more than 51,000 people in northern Gaza.

They include residents who now require assistance for the first time, as well as people who were already WFP beneficiaries but who have been uprooted by the violence.

“For people who have lost or fled their homes, one of the most pressing needs at the moment is food”, [said](#) Samer AbdelJaber, WFP Representative and Country Director in Palestine.

“The quickest and most effective way we can provide support is with cash, in the form of e-vouchers. Food is available for the time being and many local shops are still open, including those we have already contracted for our regular e-voucher support.”

WFP warned that the closure of crossings from Israel could soon lead to a scarcity in commodities, including food, and also cause food prices to rise. ...

“The majority of the population cannot withstand further shocks and the current situation could unleash a crisis that could spill into the entire region.” ...

The conflict has also affected the health sector, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Monday. ... agency chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus reported that dozens of incidents involving health workers, and facilities, occurred.

“Furthermore, COVID-19 testing and vaccination has been severely impacted. This creates health risks for the world as a whole,” he [said](#). ...

“In particular, health workers and infrastructure should always be protected and I call for leaders on all sides to ensure respect for these vital humanitarian laws,” he said. ...

The United Nations on Monday [reported](#) that more than 38,000 displaced people are seeking shelter in 48 schools run by UNRWA ...

UN Humanitarian Coordinator Lynn Hastings has appealed to the Israeli authorities and Palestinian armed groups to immediately allow the UN and partners to bring in fuel, food, and medical supplies and to deploy humanitarian personnel in Gaza.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/05/1092102>

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### **Speakers Differ over Implementation of ‘Responsibility to Protect’ Principle, as General Assembly Considers Draft Resolution on Atrocity Crime Prevention**

Delegates exchanged divergent views on applying the concept of the responsibility to protect civilians in the escalating Israeli-Palestinian conflict and crises raging in strife-affected countries like Myanmar and Syria ...

Some speakers pointed to the current Israeli-Palestinian crisis as an urgent example of the uneven implementation of the responsibility to protect concept. Wondering who is protecting the Palestinian people today, Venezuela’s delegate said Israel continues to be the occupying Power, but there is a selective application of the responsibility to protect. South Africa’s representative said Israel has clear duties as the occupying Power, discouraging double standards regarding the responsibility to protect. ...

Syria’s delegate warned about double standards when applying the responsibility to protect principle, encouraging States to vote against the draft resolution. Calling attention to atrocities Israel is currently committing against Palestinians, he said the Organization should immediately take action to protect civilians. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/ga12323.doc.htm>

### **The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (A/75/L.82)**

<https://undocs.org/en/A/75/L.82>

### **Advancing atrocity prevention: work of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (A/75/863)**

<https://undocs.org/en/A/75/863>

## **UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

### **Gaza-Israel escalation: End violence now, then work to end occupation, say UN experts**

UN human rights experts called on the international community to demand an immediate

end to the violence in Gaza and Israel, and to act decisively to address the underlying source of the conflict: the denial of collective and individual rights of the Palestinian people. "This most recent violence has a depressingly familiar pattern to it," said the experts. "Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza exchange missiles and rockets following dispossession and the denial of rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, with Israel's far greater firepower inflicting far higher death tolls and injuries and a much larger scale of property destruction." ...

"The firing by Israel of missiles and shells into heavily populated areas of Gaza – particularly with the rising civilian toll and property destruction – constitute indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks against civilians and civilian property. These attacks likely violate the laws of war and constitute a war crime," the experts said.

"Similarly, the firing of rockets by Palestinian armed groups deliberately or recklessly into Israeli urban areas likely violate international law and may well amount to a war crime. Armed groups in Gaza should also be held to account in their failure to take adequate precautions to protect the civilian population and civilian objects under their control against the effects of attacks.

"Both sides must strictly adhere to their responsibilities under international law, especially that of proportionality and necessity. There is no justification, including counter-terrorism or self-defence, to justify a wholesale abdication for the obligations of Parties to strictly obey international humanitarian law. The actions of both Israel and the Palestinian armed groups should be a matter for the International Criminal Court to investigate."

In particular, Israel's duties as the occupying power require it to allow humanitarian aid – including food, fuel and medical supplies – to enter unhindered into Gaza, the experts said. ...

The experts noted with deep regret that the international community has not acted with more unity and more success to bring an immediate end to the violence. In particular, the inability of the UN Security Council to even issue a statement after three meetings is an abdication of duty. ...

"The underlying reality is that there is an occupying power, with one of the best equipped militaries in the world, ruling over an occupied people who have the right to be freed from an unwanted and protracted alien regime," they said. "This struggle is deeply unequal. The 54-year-old Israeli occupation – already the longest occupation in the modern world – is becoming even more entrenched and even more abusive of fundamental human rights. ...

"The enemies of accountability are impunity and exceptionalism," the experts said. "It is folly to expect that the justice, peace, equality and security which both Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews have a right to enjoy can be achieved without imposing a meaningful cost on Israel, the occupying power, to fully end its illegal occupation. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27102&LangID=E>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following sixteen questions all received the same answer*

#### **Durban Conference: 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Steve McCabe (Labour) [53]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to send representatives to the Durban IV conference in September 2021.

**Steve McCabe (Labour)** [54] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the UK joining the US, Australia and Canada in boycotting the Durban IV conference in September 2021.

**Steve McCabe (Labour)** [55] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether it is the Government's policy to boycott the Durban IV conference in September 2021.

**Stephen Crabb (Conservative)** [162] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Government will issue a condemnation of the reported anti-Semitic rhetoric used at (a) the 2001 World Conference Against Racism held in Durban and (b) subsequent commemorative events of that conference.

**Stephen Crabb (Conservative)** [163] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Government will join the United States, Canada and Australia in opposing events to make the twentieth anniversary of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban.

**Andrew Percy (Conservative)** [195] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on events marking the 20th anniversary of the World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban in 2001.

**Andrew Percy (Conservative)** [196] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the upcoming events marking the 20th anniversary of the World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban in 2001.

**Bob Blackman (Conservative)** [213] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the Government's policy is on participating in the Durban IV commemorative events at the UN General Assembly in September 2021.

**Bob Blackman (Conservative)** [214] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the text of the agreed Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism constituted a breach of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism.

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [215] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on that country's decision to boycott events marking the 20th anniversary of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban.

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [216] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Canadian counterpart on that country's decision to boycott events marking the 20th anniversary of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban.

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [217] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Australian counterpart on that country's decision to boycott events marking the 20th anniversary of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban.

**Damien Moore (Conservative)** [433] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to send representatives to events marking the 20th anniversary of the World Conference Against Racism in Durban.

**Damien Moore (Conservative)** [434] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will continue his policy of not participating in events commemorating the 2001 Durban Declaration.

**Nicola Richards (Conservative)** [563] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the upcoming events marking the 20th anniversary of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, what steps

the UK is taking to prevent antisemitism within the United Nations.

**Nicola Richards (Conservative)** [564] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Government will issue a condemnation of the planned Durban IV proceedings in September 2021 at the United Nations General Assembly, marking the 20th anniversary of the World Conference Against Racism held in Durban in 2001.

**Nigel Adams:** The United Kingdom is committed to combatting all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism, both at home and abroad. We believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle injustices and advocate respect among different religious and racial groups is to encourage all states to uphold their human rights obligations. Some of the anti-Semitic actions and speeches in and around the Durban conference and its various follow-up events gave rise to serious concerns. We will consider UK attendance in the light of developments between now and the commemoration event, including the likelihood of any recurrence.

The Foreign Secretary recently reaffirmed the UK's condemnation to anti-Semitism during a debate in the House of Commons on 20 April 2021, and I raised my opposition to anti-Semitism during a Westminster Hall Debate on 26 November 2020. We also delivered a statement at the United Nations General Assembly in November expressing concern about the rise of anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination in the wake of Covid-19.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/53>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/54>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/55>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/162>

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<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/163>

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<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/195>

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<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/196>

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<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/213>

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<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/214>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/215>

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<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/216>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/217>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/433>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/434>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/563>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-11/564>

The Foreign Minister's statement, referred to above, can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-04-20/debates/D9B5056B-249B-49AA-81FA-3235207F6F40/TopicalQuestions#contribution-71596AE9-8813-4974-94B3-839114BBBB95>

Nigel Adam's statement, referred to above, can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-11-26/debates/33E19414-B2EA-4958-AC19-DBF68FFD1F91/Covid-19FreedomOfReligionOrBelief#contribution-73D6B638-6C91-4462-83AF-E88EE97469C0>

The statement to the UN General Assembly, referred to above, is not currently available online

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

### UK Parliament

#### **Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867>

#### **\*\* Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

House of Commons Library Briefing

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9215/CBP-9215.pdf>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

#### **Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS)** (closing date 30 June 2021)

<https://evensurvey.co.uk/>

#### **Protect Duty** (closing date 2 July 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protect-duty>

#### **Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19** (closing date not stated)

<https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>

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