



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Hezbollah

**Stephen Morgan (Labour)** [22014] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information the Government holds on the number of Hezbollah (a) members and (b) supporters in the UK.

**Kevin Foster:** The Government does not comment on intelligence matters.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-24/22014>

*The following four questions all received the same answer*

#### Hezbollah

**Andrew Gwynne (Labour)** [23107] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of fully proscribing Hezbollah in 2019.

**Andrew Gwynne (Labour)** [23108] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has taken steps to use the expanded law enforcement authority following Hezbollah's proscription.

**Andrew Gwynne (Labour)** [23109] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any secondary or corollary designations have been made since Hezbollah was fully proscribed.

**Andrew Gwynne (Labour)** [23110] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of Hezbollah's Foreign Relations Department since its full proscription.

**Kevin Foster:** The Government assesses proscription is a powerful tool within the counter-terrorism toolkit. In addition to the criminal offences associated with proscription, the tool can have a powerful impact on behaviour and disincentivise people from becoming members or supporters of a proscribed organisation, as well as supporting other forms of disruptive activity, including asset freezing and the take down of online content.

Since the extension of Hizballah's proscription in 2019, the Government has also extended the UK's domestic asset freeze to cover the group in its entirety.

Investigations into the activities of proscribed organisations, or individuals who may be members or supporters of proscribed organisations, are an operational matter for the police and intelligence agencies. It would not be appropriate to publish data on intelligence related matters.

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters, including whether groups are, or are not, being considered for proscription.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-28/23107>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-28/23108>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-28/23109>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-28/23110>

## Commission for Countering Extremism

### Hateful Extremism and the Law: An academic review

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/999015/Hateful\\_extremism\\_and\\_the\\_law\\_academic\\_review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999015/Hateful_extremism_and_the_law_academic_review.pdf)

## Welsh Government

### Updated guidance on reopening places of worship: coronavirus

<https://gov.wales/guidance-reopening-places-worship-coronavirus-html>

## Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

### Report on public trust and confidence in charities

<https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/media/1839/20210624-public-trust-and-confidence-research-report-2021.pdf>

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## Israel

*See also House of Commons written answers 22014, 23107, 23108, 23109, and 23110 “Hezbollah” in the Home Affairs section above.*

## House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### Israel: Palestinians

**Stephen Morgan (Labour)** [22012] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 22 June 2021 to Question 16273 on Middle East: Peace Negotiations, what peacebuilding projects between Israelis and Palestinians the UK funds.

**Stephen Morgan (Labour)** [22013] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much the Government (a) spends annually on average and (b) spent in each of the last three years through the Conflict, Stability and

Security Fund: Middle East Peace Process (MEPP).

**James Cleverly:** The Conflict Security and Stability Fund: Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) publishes an annual programme summary on development tracker that outlines the annual budget and a short summary of the programme. The link to these summaries is at:

<https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-3-CSSF-06-000023/documents>

It also includes a breakdown of projects, including the peacebuilding projects Constituencies for Peace and Support for Israeli NGOs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-24/22012>  
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-24/22013>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-15/16273>

### **Gaza: International Assistance**

**Alexander Stafford (Conservative)** [22060] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that international aid to Gaza via the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism is not misappropriated by Hamas.

**James Cleverly:** The FCDO has robust controls against fraud and diversion of aid. We work with implementers and partners that have strong safeguards in place, which reduces risk and ensures the maximum impact of UK aid for Palestinians. FCDO funding agreements commit partners to understand and comply with UK and international counter-terrorism legislation. In Gaza, we implement robust controls to monitor spending, including enhanced due diligence assessments, annual audits, and regular field visits. All these ensure that UK aid reaches its intended beneficiaries.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-24/22060>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Bob Blackman (Conservative)** [21191] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Palestinian Authority on its decision to reject the offer of one million covid-19 vaccines from Israel.

**James Cleverly:** We recognise the Palestinian Authority's responsibilities for vaccinations under the Oslo Accords (under Article 17). We welcome the steps that the parties have taken so far to coordinate responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage further dialogue in this regard. The British Embassy Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General Jerusalem are in regular contact with the relevant parties and continue to encourage cooperation and raise the issue of timely access to vaccines.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-23/21191>

### **United Nations: Children's Rights**

**Caroline Lucas (Green)** [21868] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on child safety of the UN Secretary-General's exclusion of (a) the Saudi and Emirati-led Coalition and (b) the Israeli security forces in his annual list of perpetrators of grave violations against children.

**James Cleverly:** The UK continues to call on the UN Secretary General for greater transparency on listing decisions. The UK condemns in the strongest terms all grave violations and abuses committed against children in Yemen, and we urge the parties to the conflict to uphold their human rights obligations under applicable

international law. While Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and make every effort to avoid civilian casualties. We are gravely concerned by UN reports that medical installations, schools, and houses in Gaza have been destroyed or damaged. The UK is providing £3.2 million of new UK aid to the UN agency for Palestine refugees.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-24/21868>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Israel: Guided Weapons**

**Andy Slaughter (Labour)** [21165] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will call for Israel to investigate the firing of a missile by an Israeli warplane on 12 May 2021.

#### **Gaza: Israel**

**Andy Slaughter (Labour)** [21166] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will call on the Government of Israel to investigate the firing of two missiles at a two-storey home in Gaza City's Al-Manara neighbourhood on 11 May 2021.

**James Cleverly:** 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 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.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-23/21165>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-23/21166>

#### **Ahmad Zahi Ibrahim Bani-Shamsa**

**Andy Slaughter (Labour)** [21164] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will (a) raise with his Israeli counterpart the death of 15-year-old Ahmad Zahi Ibrahim Bani-Shamsa on 16 June 2021 and (b) seek assurance that there will be a criminal investigation into his death.

**James Cleverly:** The UK is aware of the reports surrounding the death of Ahmad Zahi Ibrahim Bani-Shamsa. We urge the Government of Israel to conduct a swift and transparent investigation. 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, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. We remain concerned by the number of Palestinians, including children, killed in the West Bank and Gaza.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-23/21164>

#### **Iran: Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad**

**Alexander Stafford (Conservative)** [22061] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with international partners on Iran's financial and technical support for the Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad as terror groups in Gaza.

**James Cleverly:** We have long been clear about our concern over Iran's continued destabilising activity throughout the region including its political, financial and military support to a number of militant and proscribed groups. Hamas' military wing has been proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK since 2001. The UK maintains a no contact policy with the group in its entirety.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-24/22061>

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**James Cleverly:** Today I heard from members of the Palestine Platform group of NGOs about their important work responding to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The UK is committed to working with leaders in the region to find a durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1410632394135199744>

## United Nations

### **Amid International Inaction, Israel's Systematic 'Demographic Engineering' Thwarting Palestinians' Ability to Pursue Justice, Speakers Tell International Conference**

Home demolitions, evictions and the denial of citizenship are just some of the ways Israel has pursued its systematic policy of “demographic engineering” over 54 years, participants in the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem said today, raising questions about how Palestinians can pursue justice — let alone live secure lives — in the face of international inaction.

The International Conference — held in virtual format under the theme “Forced demographic change in Jerusalem: Grave breaches and a threat to peace” — was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, with support from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). ...

In opening remarks, **Rosemary DiCarlo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs**, speaking on behalf of Secretary-General António Guterres, said the theme is particularly relevant, as the forced displacement of Palestine refugee families in occupied East Jerusalem catalysed events that culminated in 11 days of deadly armed conflict in May. The Gaza war, the third since 2008, claimed many lives, predominantly Palestinians, she said, noting that Palestinian protests, Israel's heavy-handed response and clashes around the Aqsa Mosque compound brought tensions to a “whole new level”.

The crisis is far from over, she said, describing Jerusalem as “a powder keg”, with those who are willing to play with fire. She pointed to the provocative “flag march” by extremist Israelis chanting racist slogans through East Jerusalem, which brought about new clashes. She called on all sides to respect the status quo of Jerusalem holy sites venerated by billions of believers worldwide.

“Any threat or perceived threat to the physical integrity of the holy sites can have severe global repercussions,” she said, expressing hope that Israel's incoming Government will act responsibly. She urged Israel to cease demolitions, evictions and illegal settlement activities, stressing that measures to change Jerusalem's status and demographic composition are without legal validity and should be firmly rejected by the international community.

“Ceasefires and a patchwork of interim agreements are no substitute for a permanent status agreement, which will end the conflict,” she stressed.

Palestinians are not resigned to their fate of perpetual occupation. She urged Israeli and Palestinian leaders, supported by a revitalized Quartet on the Middle East, to recommit to credible negotiations that address all outstanding permanent-status issues, ushering in the vision of two States, based on 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital and Gaza fully integrated into the future Palestinian State through a credible, time-bound national reconciliation process.

**Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine**, similarly pointed out that Palestinians — both in occupied East Jerusalem and throughout the Occupied

Palestinian Territory — are facing massive aggression at the hands of Israel's occupying authorities. This antagonism has extended to the neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan and is indicative of Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians within both the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel itself. ...

Questioning what is being done — after 54 years of occupation — to defend international law and implement relevant Council resolutions, he called on the international community to act, rather than advocate for restraint as Israel kills civilians.

Otherwise, he said, it is unfair to continue asking Palestinians to do certain things, as they are frustrated and resentful under the current abhorrent system of occupation. "Enough is enough," he insisted. It is time for the International Criminal Court to expedite its investigation into war crimes committed against the Palestinian people. ...

**Cheikh Niang (Senegal), Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**, said Israel's settlement activities throughout the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem — including the neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan — present a major obstacle to peace, threatening in particular Palestinians' rights to self-determination and return.

He said Jewish settlers have been evicting Palestinian residents from their homes under the protection of Israel's security forces as thousands marched, yelling hate speech, to the gate of the Muslim quarter in the Old City. ...

**Samir Bakr, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs**, likewise affirmed that the absence of dissuasive international measures has emboldened Israel to carry on with its violations. ...

Emphasizing that Jerusalem has been an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 — and that its annexation is illegal, null and void — he cautioned against taking actions that legitimize Israel's pernicious moves to change the demographic, political, legal and historical status of the holy city. ...

**Lara Friedman [Foundation for Middle East Peace]** ... said events in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan speak directly to the question of who has the right to return, noting that Israel's assessment is that Israelis can return to properties lost pre-1948, but Palestinians cannot. The national narrative that "God is on Israel's side" feeds into the irreversibility of its control over the city. ... Palestinians inside Israel after 1948 were given Israeli citizenship, but Palestinians in East Jerusalem were not, leaving them in the legal limbo of permanent resident status. Palestinians born in East Jerusalem, whose families have been there for decades, today have the status of foreigners holding the "privilege" of living there, which can be rescinded at any time. ...

"There is nothing accidental about settlements in East Jerusalem," she said. They were built to anchor the entire area to Israel through a "DNA strand that can never be pulled apart". Later, the idea of "greater Jerusalem" was pursued, leaving a huge part of the West Bank to be treated as such through policies that targeted Palestinian homes inside and around the Old City, with the Government working both legally and illegally with private actors to that end. ...

Because the international community only offers empty rhetoric, it would be irrational to expect Israel to behave differently. "What is left?", she asked. "Where do Palestinians go for justice?" To expect them to pursue their claims in Israel's High Court of Justice is "delusional" ...

**Suma Qawasmī [Sheikh Jarrah community leader]** described events unfolding in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood where she lives as ethnic cleansing ... The neighbourhood is home to 28 Palestinian families who have lived there since 1956, following an agreement with Jordan, which provided the land. These families had been forcibly uprooted from their homes in historical Palestine in 1948. Following Israel's illegal annexation in 1967, the neighbourhood has faced illegal claims of ownership and forced displacement, backed by Israel's discriminatory policies. ... the world cannot continue to

turn a blind eye to Palestinians' basic human rights. "We don't want to experience the Nakba again," she stressed.

**Emily Schaeffer Omer-Man [Human Rights Attorney]** said ... In eastern Sheikh Jarrah, an agreement in place since the 1980s created a protected tenancy for the Palestinians living there — not ownership rights — and while this may have kept many in their homes, it allowed their residency to be subject to the will of settler committees that have evicted many on procedural grounds ever since. The western part, on the other hand, has been subject to a years-long battle to prove the status of the land, centered on competing claims of public ownership versus title granted to Jewish tenants by Jordanian authorities. ... This situation — rampant across the Occupied Palestinian Territory — is representative of a larger trend to rewrite international law out of the Israeli legal framework as that country fulfils a clear demographic policy through "creeping legal annexation" ...

**Nivine Sandouka, [Hoqoqna – Our Rights East Jerusalem]** ... pointed out that the previous Government emphasized the Jewish element of Israel's identity and worked to eliminate any mention of Palestinian identity or narrative in school curricula. ... Palestinians living in East Jerusalem [who] live or travel outside of the city for a period of time, or marry a person with Palestinian citizenship ... have their residency revoked despite paying taxes. ...

**Michael Lynk [United Nations Special Rapporteur]** said that, by looking at a map, one can see that Jewish Israeli settlements encircle Palestinian East Jerusalem, blocking off the Palestinian West Bank like a fortress, while a separation wall weaves in such a way as to maximize Israeli settlements and minimize the number of Palestinians living within it. ... Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem are citizens of Israel, while Palestinians hold permanent resident status — meaning they cannot vote and have no voice in what is happening around them. ... Stressing that the goal is to make it demographically and politically impossible for Palestinians to return East Jerusalem as the capital of their own State, he said the Security Council and the General Assembly both have stated that East Jerusalem is occupied, that annexation is null and void, and that Israel's attempts to demographically change that area violate the fourth Geneva Convention ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/gapal1439.doc.htm>

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

### **UK Parliament**

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

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

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

#### **Charities Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

#### **Education (16 to 19 Academies) (Religious Character) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2946>

## Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

## Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

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

## Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

## Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

## Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

## Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in tomorrow**

**Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life in the EU** (closing date 5 July 2021)

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13068-Strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-Jewish-life-in-the-EU\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13068-Strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-Jewish-life-in-the-EU_en)

**Curriculum for Wales Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance** (closing date 16 July 2021)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/consultation-document-curriculum-for-wales-religion-values-and-ethics-guidance.pdf>

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