



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Church Services and Music: Coronavirus

**Caroline Lucas (Green)** [25779] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what date he plans to publish updated covid-19 guidance on the (a) number of people allowed to attend memorial services and (b) rules for singing indoors; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Dinenage:** The government's Roadmap set out four steps out of lockdown in England. From Step 4, there will be no limits on the number of people who can sing indoors or outdoors. This includes choirs and congregational singing. The government will remove outstanding legal restrictions on social contact and life events, and open the remaining closed settings. The government will instead enable people to use personal judgement to manage the risk to themselves and others.

We will assess the four tests again on 12 July to decide whether to proceed to step 4 on 19 July. Once that decision has been made, all government guidance will be amended in light of the decision taken.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-01/25779>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Jerusalem: Palestinians

**Julian Sturdy (Conservative)** [25803] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that international law is upheld in relation to the eviction of Palestinian households the Silwan area of East Jerusalem.

**James Cleverly:** The UK regularly raises the issue of demolitions and forced evictions of Palestinians from their homes with the Government of Israel. The Foreign Secretary raised ongoing evictions, demolitions and settlement activity with the Israeli Authorities during his visit to the region on 26 May. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We monitor the situation in Silwan closely, and officials regularly visit and attend related court hearings.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-01/25803>

## Downing Street

### **PM call with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett**

The Prime Minister spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett today, to congratulate him on the formation of a new government and reaffirm the strength of the UK-Israel relationship.

The leaders stressed their commitment to deepening cooperation on defence and security, as well as in technology and trade.

They discussed the shared fight against coronavirus and welcomed the collaboration between our two countries throughout the pandemic, including exchanges between medical experts and data-sharing on vaccines.

The Prime Minister raised the importance of working together to tackle climate change, and hoped that Prime Minister Bennett would be able to attend the UK-hosted COP26 summit in November.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-israeli-prime-minister-naftali-bennett-9-july-2021>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Occupied Palestinian Territory: Israeli settlements should be classified as war crimes, says UN expert**

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk, ... called on the international community to designate the creation of Israeli settlements as a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Lynk said the Israeli settlements violate the absolute prohibition against the transfer by an occupying power of parts of its civilian population into an occupied territory. The international community designated this practice as a war crime when it adopted the Rome Statute in 1998.

“For Israel, the settlements serve two related purposes. One is to guarantee that the occupied territory will remain under Israeli control in perpetuity. The second purpose is to ensure that there will never be a genuine Palestinian state,” Lynk told the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

“These are exactly the reasons why the international community agreed to prohibit the practice of settler implantation when it created the Fourth Geneva Convention in 1949 and the Rome Statute in 1998.”

He said the Israeli settlements were “the engine of Israel’s 54-year-old occupation, the longest in the modern world”. ...

Lynk said that the illegality of the Israeli settlements is one of the most settled and uncontroversial issues in modern international law and diplomacy. Their illegality has been confirmed by the United Nations Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the International Court of Justice, the International Committee of the Red

Cross, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and by many international and regional human rights organizations. ...

In his report, the Special Rapporteur called on the international community to adopt a plan of action:

1. Fully support the work of the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC as it investigates whether the Israeli settlements violate the Rome Statute;
2. Call upon Israel to fully dismantle its settlements;
3. Develop a comprehensive menu of accountability measures to bring Israel in compliance with international law should it continue to defy the international community;
4. Ensure full accountability of Israeli political, military and administrative leaders who are responsible for grave breaches of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and
5. Call upon all UN member states to implement the injunction of the Security Council in 1980, in Resolution 465, not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used in connection with the settlements.

“The time for criticism of the Israeli settlements has passed,” said Lynk. “Former Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has said only last week that it is the lack of any international legal accountability which has enabled Israel to ignore successive UN resolutions. A new approach grounded in international law is the only path to a just end to this perpetual occupation.”

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27291&LangID=E>

*Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (A/HRC/47/57)*

[https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session47/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_47\\_57\\_AdvanceUneditedVersion.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session47/Documents/A_HRC_47_57_AdvanceUneditedVersion.docx)

*Ban Ki-Moon's comments, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.ft.com/content/c1210a21-0209-4c4b-8cb3-cfa31c3fdee0>

## **Israeli Settlements Amount to a War Crime, Special Rapporteur Tells Human Rights Council**

... **Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967**, regretted the fact that Israel had taken no steps to engage with his mandate, nor granted him access to the occupied Palestinian territory, which was important for the fulfilment of his mandate. Turning to the human rights situation in Palestine recently, he said that in East Jerusalem, Israeli settler organizations sought to evict Palestinian families from their homes, primarily in the neighbourhoods of Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah. Discriminatory Israeli property laws permitted Israeli Jews to reclaim properties lost in the 1948 war, but prevented Palestinians from doing the same. Israeli courts had been enforcing those laws. However, under the Fourth Geneva Convention, forcible transfer of the protected population was prohibited, and the occupying power was forbidden from applying its own laws to the occupied territory. ...

In his report, he concluded that the Israeli settlements did amount to a war crime. He called upon the international community to fully support the work of the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, as well as to develop a menu of accountability measures to be applied to Israel should it continue to defy international law, including reviewing trade, investment and cultural agreements, and ending arms sales with Israel. The international community needed to ensure full accountability of Israeli political, military and administrative officials who were responsible for grave breaches of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory.

**Israel** was not present to take the floor as a country concerned.

**State of Palestine**, speaking as a country concerned, said the silence of some countries on this agenda item disqualified them from talking about any other violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law anywhere in the world; it exposed their double standards and encouraged the occupying power to continue its daily violations. In reaction to the colonial settlements, the international community must take the necessary measures to punish this colonial regime, hold it accountable, isolate it, boycott its products, impose economic and political sanctions, and refuse to deal with any Israeli Government that entrenched apartheid. ...

Some speakers reiterated that settlements were illegal under international law ... Some speakers recognised Israel's right to self-defence, underlining that this right must be exercised in a proportionate manner. Others condemned the demographic social engineering that Israel was continuing to freely exercise in the occupied Palestinian territory, amounting to ethnic cleansing ... Many speakers decried the illegal evictions that prevented the establishment of a Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem ... Speakers said that the continued colonisation was a war crime and denounced the construction of new Israeli colonies.

Drawing attention to Sheikh Jarrah, Batn al-Hawa, and al-Bustan, where Palestinians faced imminent expulsion, several speakers urged support for accountability mechanisms, including an investigation by the International Criminal Court, the newly established Commission of Inquiry, and annual updates of the United Nations database. ... In addition to confiscation of land, tons of agricultural assets were destroyed during the Israeli military attack on Gaza in May 2021; the human rights mechanisms should examine the violations of the rights of peasants. ... During the May conflicts, anti-Semitism rose around the world. Some drew a contrast between the autocratic practices of the Palestinian authorities which had led to protestations on the ground, and the democratic nature of Israel. ...

**Michael Lynk** ... wanted to draw the attention of the international community to the destruction of Hamsa in the Northern Jordan Valley, where on Wednesday this week, Israel had demolished 27 residential shelters, confiscated community belongings, food, water, and clothing, leaving the community without sustenance and shelter ... Hamsa was only one of such communities ... meanwhile illegal Israeli settlements in the area remained undisturbed. The 54-year-old occupation was paradoxically thick with laws, yet lawless. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27295&LangID=E>

**Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (A/HRC/47/57)**

[https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session47/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_47\\_57\\_AdvanceUneditedVersion.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session47/Documents/A_HRC_47_57_AdvanceUneditedVersion.docx)

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

### UK Parliament

**\*\* Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/42181/documents/499>

## **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>

## **Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

## **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

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

## **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill**

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

## **Nationality and Borders Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

## **Online Safety Bill (Draft)**

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

## **Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

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

## **Northern Ireland Assembly**

### **Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill**

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 5 days**

**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>

**Animal welfare [EU legislation]** (closing date 3 August 2021)

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation_en)

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