



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Debate

Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill

col 91 Roger Gale (Conservative): ... I would like to raise an issue that is not in the Bill, but which will, I think, be so soon: the matter of non-stun slaughter. Some of us have worked carefully—one colleague, in particular, has worked very hard indeed—with the religious organisations, particularly those of the Jewish faith and Muslims, to make certain that it is understood that we do not seek to interfere with religious practice. That said, there is a case for much greater regulation of non-stunned slaughtered animals, because we know perfectly well that vast amounts of kosher and halal meat are produced—not for the British market even, but for export. There is no necessity whatever for that. I believe that I am right in saying that my hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset (Chris Loder) will be seeking to address this matter. If he wishes to intervene, I would be happy to give way to him.

Chris Loder (Conservative): I thank my right hon. Friend very much; I appreciate his comments. I hope that the whole House would agree that we should indeed pay real attention to and have a real debate on this matter. Does he agree that while we as a House talk very much about the care of our pets—our cats, dogs and others—we should also be having an appropriate, understanding and sensitive debate about that matter?

Roger Gale: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. If he chooses the appropriate time to bring in a suitably sensitive amendment, then he will certainly have my support, and I would hope that he might well have the support of those on the Front Bench as well. ...

To read the full transcript see

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-25/debates/58F30AB3-1785-491F-B9ED-0DDD739F64D8/AnimalWelfare\(KeptAnimals\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-25/debates/58F30AB3-1785-491F-B9ED-0DDD739F64D8/AnimalWelfare(KeptAnimals)Bill)

House of Commons Written Answers

The following three questions all received the same answer

Hate Crime

Elliot Colburn (Conservative) [56584] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the number of reported incidents of hate crime that progress through the courts.

Elliot Colburn (Conservative) [56586] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is engaging with the Ministry of Justice in preparation for the Law Commission's final report on the Hate Crime Review.

Elliot Colburn (Conservative) [56587] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Law Commission's Consultation Paper, Hate crime laws, published on 23 September 2021, whether her Department supports the creation of a hate crime commissioner.

Rachel Maclean: In 2018, the Government asked the Law Commission to undertake a review of current hate crime legislation, including whether additional protected characteristics, such as sex, gender and age, should be included.

The Law Commission's review is also looking at the adequacy and parity of protection offered by the law relating to hate crime and the current range of offences and aggravating factors in sentencing. The Law Commission aims to make recommendations on the most appropriate models to ensure that the criminal law provides consistent and effective protection from conduct motivated by hatred towards protected groups or characteristics.

Publication of the final report is a matter for the Law Commission, which is independent. However, I understand that the Law Commission intends to publish its recommendations later this year, following which the Government will formally respond. Given the complex issues that the Law Commission identified in its consultation, it would be inappropriate to pre-empt the conclusions of its review.

Data on hate crime convictions and cases which proceeded through the criminal justice system can be found here:

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/cps-quarterly-data-summaries>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56584>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56586>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56587>

The consultation paper (consultation closed) referred to above can be read at

<https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lawcom-prod-storage-11jsxou24uy7q/uploads/2020/10/Hate-crime-final-report.pdf>

Schools: Festivals and Special Occasions

Catherine West (Labour) [57217] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his policy is on (a) non-Christian festivals such as Eid and Diwali being recognised more in state schools and (b) allowing non-Christian students to get a legal holiday for their religious festivals.

Robin Walker: Schools play an important role in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. This involves supporting pupils to understand the society in which they grow up and teaching about respect for other people and for difference. All schools are required to actively promote fundamental British values, including mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

The government does not specify how schools should teach religious education or the topics that religious education must cover. State funded schools either follow a locally agreed syllabus for religious education or design and deliver their own

curriculum. This leaves them free to recognise or teach about non-Christian festivals if they choose to.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, sets out that schools should treat a pupil's absence as authorised if it is on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

The department does not define which specific days schools should authorise for religious observance, though generally, it may be a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their workplace in order to mark the occasion. We advise schools to seek advice from the relevant religious body if they are in doubt.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/57217>

UN Climate Change Conference 2021: Religion

Stuart Anderson (Conservative) [56667] To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to ensure that faith communities are effectively represented at COP26.

Alok Sharma: Representing over 80% of the world's population, faith and spiritual groups have a unique perspective on climate change, in making the moral case to individuals, communities and states to protect the planet and support the most vulnerable in society. This is why the UK COP26 Presidency is working with faith leaders from across the globe to inspire a global response to climate change and drive real world action.

We have worked in collaboration with Italy and the Vatican to convene global faith leaders ahead of COP26. On 4 October 2021, I [travelled to the Vatican](#) where Pope Francis presented me with a signed joint Appeal from faith leaders calling on the international community to raise their climate ambition.

I have also established a dedicated civil society engagement team who work with faith communities. In April 2021, I met UK-based faith leaders to discuss how the UK Presidency can best work with faith leaders to deliver an inclusive and ambitious COP26. Officials worked with faith leaders in the UK and across the globe to produce the [COP26 faith toolkit](#). This contains guidance on how religious, faith and spiritual communities can support climate action in the run up to and beyond COP26.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56667>

Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure

Guidance for Religious Establishments

<https://www.cpni.gov.uk/resources/smc-religious-establishments>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Places of Worship: Face Coverings

Rachael Hamilton (Conservative) [S6W-03564] To ask the Scottish Government when it will revise the guidance on face coverings in places of worship.

John Swinney: The Scottish Government is required by law to regularly review all protective measures that are currently in place, such as the mandatory requirement for the wearing of face coverings in most indoor settings, including places of worship. This measure will continue to be monitored and reviewed in relation to evidence on the four harms : the direct impact of COVID-19, other health impacts, societal impacts, and economic impacts.

After a recent review, during which there was careful consideration of all of the current evidence as well as the options available, Ministers determined that the regulations on face coverings remain proportionate and should not change for the present.

At this stage of the pandemic many of the more intrusive restrictions have been lifted, but the virus and the harms that it causes have not gone away. We still continue to see hospital admissions and deaths as a result of COVID and the impacts of long COVID can be significant. That is why it remains important to maximise the use of the remaining measures such as face coverings. While the vaccination has significantly weakened the link between new cases and serious health harms, it has not been completely broken. It is therefore important that places of worship, along with many other indoor settings, continue their good practice to reduce the spread of the virus.

We are grateful to faith and belief communities for their important role in protecting their congregations and enabling everyone, particularly those at higher risk, to access worship safely.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-03564>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answers

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56355] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer to Question 41609 of 13 September 2021 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, by what date the charity undertook to secure pledges of at least £25 million of private funding for that Centre.

Kemi Badenoch: Funding arrangements will be in place before main construction begins.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56355>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41609>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56358] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 41611 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, which operating models are under consideration for the management of the proposed Centre.

Kemi Badenoch: A range of operating models are under consideration.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56358>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41611>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56724] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 41608 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, if he will revisit the cost estimate for that Centre made in December 2018 to take account of recent changes in costs.

Kemi Badenoch: The cost estimate is reviewed regularly as part of normal programme management arrangements.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56724>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41608>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56725] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to question 41608 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, what the estimated cost of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre is for (a) pre-construction planning and design, (b) site preparation, (c) construction including for (i) materials and (ii) labour, (d) fitting out, (e) taxes, (f) contingencies and (g) any other significant categories of cost.

Kemi Badenoch: This information is commercially sensitive and not currently suitable for publication

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56725>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41608>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service: Costs

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56726] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 41608 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, what allowance has been made in the estimated cost of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre for optimism bias; what (a) category of project, (b) mitigation factor and (c) optimism bias factor were used; and whether the planned mitigation has been independently verified.

Kemi Badenoch: The estimated cost has been produced in line with Green Book guidance.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56726>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41608>

National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56727] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation made of the costs of creating the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre on each of the three sites shortlisted in January 2016 by CBRE.

Kemi Badenoch: The sites shortlisted by CBRE were not assessed by the Foundation as suitable and no detailed cost estimates were made.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56727>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56728] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 41607 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, if he will provide a breakdown of the estimated annual running costs of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre; and if he will place the detailed figures in the Library.

Kemi Badenoch: Estimated running costs are kept under review. More detailed figures will be provided at the appropriate time.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56728>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41607>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service: Costs

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56729] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 41608 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, what contracts for the (a) construction, (b) operation, (c) maintenance and (d) security of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre have been signed to date; and what proportion of the estimated total cost has been committed.

Kemi Badenoch: A contract is in place under (a) construction for enabling works, including redirecting cables, new incoming services, relocating the Spicer Memorial, tree root investigation and pruning. No contracts have been let under (b) operation, (c) maintenance and (d) security.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56729>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41608>

Holocaust Commission

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56731] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 41612 on the Holocaust Commission, when the Government plans to announce funding for implementation of the recommendations of the 2015 Holocaust Commission other than the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre; and from which budgets those funds will be allocated.

Kemi Badenoch: Good progress is being made with implementation of the recommendations of the 2015 Holocaust Commission. Announcements will be made at the appropriate time.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56731>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41612>

National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56733] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Permanent Secretary has asked for an instruction relating to the proposed National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

Kemi Badenoch: No Ministerial direction has been requested.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56733>

National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56736] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much of the funding available for the National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre has been spent on education in each of the last six years.

Kemi Badenoch: Funding for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre is allocated solely for the development of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56736>

Imperial War Museum

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56732] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to visit the Holocaust Galleries at the Imperial War Museum.

Kemi Badenoch: Members of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation have accepted an invitation from the Imperial War Museum to visit the new galleries.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56732>

TOP

House of Commons Debate

Abraham Accords

col 113 **Robert Jenrick (Conservative):** ... This debate has three purposes. The first is to note and celebrate a significant development that has occurred within the last year in the middle east. The fact that Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan—we note the concerning situation in Sudan that we have heard about today ... — have come together and taken a material step forward in the relationships, normalising relations between the nations, the faiths and the peoples, is potentially a substantial step forward.

The second point that I would like to raise this evening is how we can nurture this fragile agreement and help it to continue and to broaden the circle of nations that have taken part in it. The Israeli ambassador to the United States, Gilad Erdan, has said that this is a bit like a wedding, in that we have had the party and made vows to each other, but the true test is whether that can lead to a lasting partnership. That work really is required now. As with any marriage, it is up to friends, allies and supporters to ensure that we help it to succeed in the months and years to come.

That brings me to the third point that I would like to raise this evening. What is the role for the United Kingdom, and for our Government in particular, in taking this forward?

Jim Shannon (DUP): ... Does he not agree that the anniversary of the Abraham accords is the perfect opportunity for this House to reaffirm our commitment to the state of Israel and to peace in the middle east as a whole, and to recognise the achievement of continued peace during this past year? ...

Robert Jenrick: He is absolutely right. ... The events of just over a year ago, when some of those countries were able to come together and sign the accords, were very significant, and I do not think we should underestimate the profound change in the relationships that underpins those accords.

col 114 There have always been relations between those nations in one form or another—often discreet and sometimes covert. ... My uncle, Eli Rubinstein, the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Israel, was the chief negotiator at the Camp David accords. He told me that he would meet privately and holiday with his former interlocutors from Jordan, Egypt and other states who had been involved in those negotiations, in order to continue the friendships that they had built up. However, that is nothing compared with what we are now seeing as a result of these transformational changes. In the past year alone, 200,000 Israelis have gone to the United Arab Emirates, mostly to Dubai, for holidays and weddings. Synagogues have been set up in hotels for Rosh Hashanah. There were synagogues in ballrooms in the four-star and five-star hotels that many are familiar with in the United Arab Emirates. That is something that could not have been imagined just a year or so ago. ...

At Dubai Expo, Israel became one of the 191 countries to have its own stand. That was the first time that Israel had been welcomed to a trade exhibition in an Arab nation. Already, almost \$700 million of bilateral trade has occurred between Israel and the UAE alone. ...

We have seen collaboration on covid vaccines and research, and we have even seen a kidney transplant facilitated jointly by the UAE and an Israeli donor programme. ...

Beyond those two nations, others have joined in different ways. Some prominently, such as Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan, and others in simpler ways that we should not underestimate, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enabling flights over the kingdom for the first time ... There is increased sharing of intelligence and security, and greater religious tolerance has been encouraged.

On Saudi media, for example, the imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca urged Muslims to

avoid passionate emotions and fiery enthusiasm towards Jews, which will make a difference over time. ...

The benefits to the UK are also clear. ... We have huge trade in innovation, technology and security interests, all of which becomes simpler and easier for us to do knowing that relations are gradually normalising between these nations to which we already have strong ties.

The accords will also benefit interfaith relations here in the UK, as our Jewish and Muslim communities are able to see the normalisation of relations, with more tolerant and sensible language being used in the middle east, and peaceful co-existence beginning to happen, if only in a small way.

col 115 In May 2021, during the Gaza conflict, we saw a serious diminution in relations between the Jewish and Muslim communities in this country—perhaps the worst seen for several years. There was an increase in hate crime, as recorded by the Community Security Trust with respect to antisemitic abuse and by Tell MAMA with respect to Islamophobic and anti-Muslim hate crime. We saw terrible incidents, such as the convoy of vehicles through Golders Green in north London. The relations that are now building between Israel and Arab and Muslim countries in the Gulf can only be positive in helping to build ties and break down barriers. ...

The accords managed to survive the 11-day Gazan conflict, which tested relationships both here and in the middle east. All of that points to the accords being substantial and lasting. However, we should not be naive. Such developments may look like the dawn of a new era in the middle east, but they could easily unravel. ...

The draws me to the thrust of the debate: what is the role of the United Kingdom and our Government? ... Short of the United States, we have the deepest and longest-standing relationships in the region in diplomacy and security, as well as the relations between our royal family and those of Gulf nations. We also have huge numbers of citizens who know and have relatives in those respective countries. ...

col 116 In many respects, it is disappointing that the UK was not closely associated with the work done last year. In 2019, I was privileged to represent the UK at the Peace to Prosperity conference in Bahrain organised by Jared Kushner, the then special adviser to President Trump. It was easy to be cynical of that initiative—it was very unlikely that the Israel-Palestine conflict would have been materially advanced by that conference or by Jared Kushner's proposals—but, from spending time there, it was clear that deep relationships were being built between nations in the Gulf and the United States and, above all, with Israel, and that they might just bear fruit. On one day—it was not widely publicised at the time—a number of delegates from a range of countries, including Arab nations, visited a synagogue in Bahrain. ...

There is an opportunity for us to use our diplomatic power, our diplomatic and security relationships and our rapidly building commercial ties actively to get fully behind the initiative. Through that, we can support those nations who have already signed up to the Abraham accords, to help ensure that we do not see that progress slip through our fingers. We can also think carefully about which other nations might be willing to sign up to the accords or to take steps in that direction. ...

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): ... The Abraham accords were indeed an historic moment, beginning a new chapter in Israeli foreign policy and regional collaboration, hopefully bringing us all a step closer to resolving one of the major issues driving instability and conflict in the middle east. ...

col 117 The United Kingdom and Bahrain also have a close and long-standing relationship ... We benefit from a genuine and open dialogue, working together on mutually beneficial issues while also being able to speak frankly when we have concerns. Meanwhile, the UK is Israel's largest European trading partner, with total trade worth around £5 billion last year ...

Israel remains an incredibly important strategic partner, and we collaborate closely on

issues such as counter-terrorism and cyber to address our shared national security threats. ... I am happy to make it clear that our commitment to Israel's security is unwavering. ... We were one of the first countries to welcome the accords and to celebrate the other normalisation agreements that followed with Morocco and ... Sudan. During the last 12 months, we have been celebrating and reinforcing the agreements, although that period has of course proved a challenge. We are pleased to see that the three nations have grasped the opportunities that normalisation presented. ... A new Israeli embassy has opened in Manama. Direct commercial flights have commenced and agreements have been reached on sport, health and environmental protection. ...

col 118 It is important that these agreements also lead to tangible benefits for the Palestinian people. Sadly, the escalation in violence that we saw in May of this year and the loss of life that resulted is yet another reminder that we collectively have a responsibility to break the cycle of violence using our strong and strengthening relationships with all the parties.

As the Abraham accords demonstrated with the suspension of plans for annexation, normalisation has had a positive track record for delivering progress toward shared goals. The UK is committed to making progress towards a sustainable two-state solution that ensures a safe and secure Israel living alongside a safe and secure Palestinian state based on 1967 border lines, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states. We believe that negotiations will be the only way to get this outcome that will be supported by Israelis, Palestinians and the wider international community. Echoing the words of Israel's Minister of Defence, Benny Gantz, the accords have opened a "window of opportunity" to advance steps towards a political middle east peace process.

We want to see greater co-ordination and co-operation between Israelis and Palestinians, particularly on economic initiatives, to help improve the day-to-day lives of Palestinians and build increased dialogue. ...

We welcome recent engagements between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian leadership, including the meeting between Palestinian President Abbas and Israeli Defence Minister Gantz on 29 August this year.

I am due to visit Israel in December ... I will then have completed the trio of the Abraham accords' initial signatories, having visited the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain earlier this year. I look forward to discussing what further opportunities the accords bring, not just regarding our respective relationships with Israel, the Arab Emirates and Bahrain, but to see what we can do to use the accords to further peace and prosperity in the region more widely. ...

The Abraham accords demonstrate how normalisation can bring people together to forge new friendships and, as my right hon. Friend said, perhaps most importantly to nurture hope. We will continue to intensify our diplomatic efforts in the region, focused on creating the conditions for long-term, sustainable peace. I look forward to working closely with my opposite numbers in the UAE, Bahrain and Israel, and, indeed, any other country that wishes to join and support the normalisation of relations, and bring peace, strength and stability to the region.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-25/debates/D23DE548-6778-419A-8E56-4182FEC0B3EE/AbrahamAccords>

House of Lords Written Answers

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL2967] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning the violence

used by Israeli forces against protestors at Sheikh Jarrah.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK regularly raises the issue of forced evictions from their homes, including in Sheikh Jarrah, with the Government of Israel. On 8 May Minister Cleverly publicly expressed concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. The former Foreign Secretary visited the region on 25 May where he urged the Israeli Government to take steps to ensure calm in Jerusalem. We 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/2021-10-11/hl2967>

The Minister's expression of concern referred to above can be read at

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

Hebron: Mosques

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL2968] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding (1) the denial of access to Palestinians for worship in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, and (2) the prevention of the call to prayer, since 1 September.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate General in Jerusalem regularly raise issues of religious freedom with the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority. We continue to call on all sides to uphold the historic status quo at the Holy Sites.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-11/hl2968>

Hazem Joulani

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL2969] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the killing of Dr. Hazem Joulani by Israeli forces in East Jerusalem, and the reports that he was denied medical attention before his death.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of the Israel security force's adherence to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest. The wounded or critically ill should be able to access the urgent medical care they need.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-11/hl2969>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [583] **Proscribing of Palestinian human rights organisations** – That this House condemns the declaration of 22 October 2021 made by Israeli Minister of Defence, Benny Gantz, which designated six Palestinian civil society groups as terrorist organisations; notes that the Israeli authorities have not provided any evidence to substantiate their claims about the organisations; further notes that the targeted groups Al-Haq, Addameer, Bisan Center, Defence for Children International Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, and the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees are organisations deeply committed to protecting the human rights of Palestinian communities, highlighting Israel's illegal policies and also those of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas; further notes the statement of 22 Israeli civil society groups based in Israel in support of the six NGOs; views this as a further direct assault on Palestinian civil society in an effort to isolate and suffocate Palestinian human rights defenders; recognises the significant impact this assault has on some of the most prominent Palestinian civil society organisations including on the local and international public's right to information about the reality of human rights violations in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories; calls on

the Government to demand that the Israeli Government reveal any evidence against those organisations; and further calls on the Government to reaffirm its support for Palestinian and Israeli civil society and human rights organisations as a key foundation in building a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/59067>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel's "terrorism" designation an unjustified attack on Palestinian civil society – Bachelet

Israel's decision to designate six Palestinian civil society organizations as "terrorist organizations" is an attack on human rights defenders, on freedoms of association, opinion and expression and on the right to public participation, and should be immediately revoked, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said on Tuesday.

The organizations concerned* are some of the most reputable human rights and humanitarian groups in the occupied Palestinian territory and for decades have worked closely with the UN.

The designation decisions under the Israeli Counter-Terrorism Law of 2016 are based on extremely vague or unsubstantiated reasons, including entirely peaceful and legitimate human rights activities, such as providing legal aid to Palestinians in detention, organizing activities for women in the West Bank and "promoting steps against Israel in the international arena."

"Claiming rights before a UN or other international body is not an act of terrorism, advocating for the rights of women in the occupied Palestinian territory is not terrorism, and providing legal aid to detained Palestinians is not terrorism," Bachelet said.

The High Commissioner reiterated that counter-terrorism legislation must not be applied to legitimate human rights and humanitarian work. The banning of organizations must not be used to suppress or deny the right to freedom of association, or to quash political dissent, silence unpopular views or limit the peaceful activities of civil society. The national authorities responsible for proscribing organizations must comply fully with the State's international human rights obligations, including by respecting the principles of legal certainty, proportionality, equality and non-discrimination. ...

The published designation decisions by the Israeli Minister of Defence state that the organizations are, or have become, the "arm" of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and that they obtained financial resources, which in practice reached the "[PFLP] terror activity" or supported their activities. There is no evidence presented to support these accusations, no information on the type of alleged "PFLP terror activity," nor has any public process been conducted to establish the allegations. ...

"The designation decisions contravene the right to freedom of association of the individuals affected and more broadly have a chilling effect on human rights defenders and civic space. Any restrictions on the right to freedom of association must meet a strict test of necessity and proportionality," the High Commissioner said. "In addition, these latest developments highlight how problematic Israel's counter-terrorism law is, including its overly broad definition of terrorism, problems of due process and the manner in which it allows evidence to be kept secret."

The designations against the six organizations on 19 October are the latest in a long-running series of actions to undermine and restrict human rights defenders and civil society organizations working for the human rights of Palestinians, including using military regulations to declare groups unlawful. ...

"Israel must ensure that human rights defenders are not detained, charged and convicted in relation to their legitimate work to protect and promote human rights. I call on the Israeli authorities to revoke their designations against Palestinian human rights and humanitarian

organisations as terrorist organizations, as well as their declarations against those they deem to be 'unlawful'," Bachelet said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27708&LangID=E>

UN experts condemn Israel's designation of Palestinian human rights defenders as terrorist organisations

UN human rights experts today strongly and unequivocally condemned the decision by the Israeli Minister of Defence, Benny Gantz, to designate six Palestinian human rights and civil society groups as terrorist organisations.

"This designation is a frontal attack on the Palestinian human rights movement, and on human rights everywhere," said the experts. "Silencing their voices is not what a democracy adhering to well-accepted human rights and humanitarian standards would do. We call upon the international community to defend the defenders." ...

"The misuse of counter-terrorism measures in this way by the government of Israel undermines the security of all," the experts said. "The freedoms of association and expression must be fully respected in order to enable civil society to perform its indispensable work, and cannot be undermined by the manifestly egregious misuse of counterterrorism and security legislation." ...

"These organisations speak the language of universal human rights," the experts said. "They use a rights-based approach to their work, including a gendered analysis, to document human rights abuses of all kinds in Palestine, including business-related human rights abuses."

This designation would effectively ban the work of these human rights defenders, and allow the Israeli military to arrest their staff, shutter their offices, confiscate their assets and prohibit their activities and human rights work. ...

"The Israeli military has frequently targeted human rights defenders in recent years, as its occupation has deepened, its defiance of international law has continued and its record of human rights violations has worsened," the experts said. "While international and Israeli human rights organisations have faced heavy criticism, legislative restrictions and even deportations, Palestinian human rights defenders have always encountered the severest constraints."

The human rights experts called upon the international community to use its full range of political and diplomatic tools to request that Israel review and reverse this decision. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27702&LangID=E>

UN expert calls for "brave" new approach to end Israeli occupation of Palestine

A new "imaginative and brave" playbook is needed to achieve the globally agreed goal to end the 54-year-old Israeli occupation and secure Palestine's self-determination, a UN human rights expert told the General Assembly ...

"Yesterday's playbook ... has only led to repeated diplomatic *cul-de-sacs*, while enabling the patterns of human rights abuses and an endless occupation to continue largely unimpeded," said Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. "This has been a political failure of the first order." ...

Lynk's annual report to the General Assembly focused on the effectiveness of four of the influential international actors involved in the Middle East process and the supervision of the Israeli occupation: the United States, the European Union, the World Bank and the Quartet (UN, EU, USA and Russia).

"By not imposing a meaningful cost on Israel for its endless occupation, the policies of these four actors – inadvertently or not – have been contributing to the consolidation of Israeli control over the occupied Palestinian territory," Lynk said.

“The occupation is more embedded than ever. The living conditions of the Palestinians, let alone their political future, have become even more precarious. Israel’s defiance has gone almost completely unchecked. ...

“Recent trends on the ground are getting worse, not better,” Lynk warned. “The Israeli settlement population is approaching 700,000 settlers. The network of roads and utilities connecting the settlements to Israel and each other is expanding. Settler attacks against Palestinians are sustaining a coercive environment. Gaza remains under a tight blockade, which deepens its impoverishment and distress. And the amount of violence required by Israel to maintain the occupation contains to rise.” ...

Lynk called on the international community, and its leading actors, to enforce its own rules and resolutions respecting the Israeli occupation. “We cannot continue to tolerate the intolerable: the imposition of a colonial reality in Palestine in the 21st century,” the UN expert said.

“We need a rights-based approach, but we also need imaginative and brave diplomacy that is willing to ask the honest questions as to how this five-decade-old occupation has turned into a *de facto* annexation, and worse.”

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27706&LangID=E>

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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>

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 3 days**

The Scottish Government's international work (closing date 29 October 2021)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/cteea/international-engagement-external-affairs/>

Labelling for Animal Welfare (closing date 6 December 2021)

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-welfare-market-interventions-and-labelling/labelling-for-animal-welfare/>

Proposed Assisted Dying for Terminally ill Adults (Scotland) Bill (closing date 22 December 2021)

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/proposals-for-bills/proposed-assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Animal Welfare – revision of EU legislation (Food Safety) (closing date 21 January 2022)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation/public-consultation_en

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2022-2025

(closing date not stated)

<https://nihrc.org/news/detail/we-want-to-hear-from-you-about-our-strategic-planning-2022-2025>

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