



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answer

Visas: Married People

Stephen Farry (Alliance) [58568] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a person who has recently married a UK national is eligible to apply for the Spouse Visa while their Marriage Visitor Visa is still valid.

Kevin Foster: Visitors must leave the UK before applying for another type of permission, including as a spouse. An application may be made outside the UK whilst the marriage visit visa is still valid.

The applicant should apply in the country in which they are living. Further details on the spouse visa are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/uk-family-visa/partner-spouse>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-18/58568>

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Israel

House of Commons Oral Answers

Palestinian Authority: ODA

John Howell (Conservative): What steps she is taking to ensure that official development assistance to the Palestinian Authority supports the peace process. (903830)

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): Development programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories work to preserve the prospect of a negotiated two-state solution and simultaneously to improve the lives of Palestinians, in line with the UK's long-standing approach to the middle east peace process. Although the UK will no longer provide direct funding to the Palestinian Authority, we understand the importance of capacity building of Palestinian institutions.

John Howell: Earlier this year, the long-awaited EU review into the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum was published, and it confirmed numerous examples of antisemitism. I note the Minister's recent announcement that the UK is no longer funding Palestinian teachers to draft and deliver this curriculum, but will he ensure that any further UK support to Palestinian education is conditional on a zero-tolerance approach to antisemitism, and that that is shown at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East?

James Cleverly: I assure my hon. Friend that the UK Government take a zero-tolerance approach to anti-semitism, wherever it is. The reduction in funding to the Palestinian Authority was in direct response to the official development assistance prioritisation review, which was itself in response to the economic constraints driven by covid. We do, however, continue to support the Palestinians through the UNRWA. We will ensure that, as we have done, we continue to press for that education curriculum to be devoid of any examples of antisemitism.

Tony Lloyd (Labour): I obviously totally agree with bringing pressure to bear on issues such as antisemitism. Nevertheless, the humanitarian crisis that exists in Gaza in particular ought to shock the world, with a lack of access to clean water and of proper education, particularly for young girls and women in Gaza. As a country, we still ought to support the provision of those things. Can the Minister give us a clear understanding of when that assistance will return, because it matters?

James Cleverly: As I said, the UK continues to support UNRWA, which does fantastic work in both the west bank and Gaza. On my recent trip to Egypt, I spoke with Egyptian officials about the work that they had done to help to support Gaza after the conflict. The best thing that we can all do for the people of Gaza, the OPTs and the wider region is to push for a sustainable, peaceful two-state solution. That will remain the foundation stone of the UK's policy in the region.

Chris Law (SNP): ... How can this Government be serious about supporting the peace process and striving for reconciliation when they are cutting aid spending by 71%? With further deeply damaging cuts expected in tomorrow's Budget and spending review, does the Minister not see that slashing the aid budget fundamentally undermines our national security as well as being against our national interest?

James Cleverly: I remind the House that because of covid this country experienced the worst economic contraction in three centuries, and it was absolutely right that we responded to that. We remain, in both absolute and percentage terms, one of the most generous aid donors in the world. We are proud of that record, as I and my right hon. Friends in Government have said. We aim to return to 0.7% as soon as the fiscal situation allows.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/A27236D1-D4BC-4754-8B23-F0AD572ABE38/PalestinianAuthorityODA>

The review referred to above can be read at

<https://owncloud.gei.de/index.php/s/FwkMw8NZgCAJgPW/download>

Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Matt Western (Labour): I welcome the Secretary of State to her position. Will she update the House on her Government's recent discussions with international allies on restarting a meaningful peace process between Palestine and the Israeli Government? Will she describe the personal importance that she attaches to achieving a two-state solution? (903857)

James Cleverly: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary engages regularly with the leadership of both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. It remains a foundation stone of UK foreign policy in the region to pursue, support and, where possible, facilitate a two-state solution based on 1967 lines with agreed land swaps and Jerusalem as a shared capital of both states.

Philip Hollobone (Conservative): As well as funding anti-Israel terror groups in Lebanon, Gaza and Syria, Iran is systematically and aggressively advancing its nuclear weapons programme, and is now enriching uranium to 60% for the first time ever. While the west dithers, Iran enriches more uranium. Do we actually have a serious and credible plan to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon? (903860)

Elizabeth Truss: My hon. Friend is right: we absolutely must stop Iran securing those nuclear capabilities, and we are working closely with our allies across the world. I have chaired a meeting of the five permanent members of the Security Council to discuss this very issue.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/A8481A7F-BDA1-47EB-BECE-6CB9124DA694/TopicalQuestions#contribution-28AD88F6-476A-479D-BA57-E2B3489BF3BA>

Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat): What evidence have the Government of Israel given the Foreign Secretary or her Department to justify the designation of six Palestinian human rights organisations as terrorist organisations? Does she agree with me—and, indeed, with the assessment of B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organisation—that this is not worthy of a democracy, and is more what we expect from repressive regimes? (903862)

James Cleverly: The UK's relationship with Israel is strong and important, and the strength of that relationship allows us to raise sensitive issues such as this. I assure the right hon. Gentleman that we will be speaking to our friends and colleagues in the Israeli Government about the reasons why they felt that they needed to designate those organisations.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/A8481A7F-BDA1-47EB-BECE-6CB9124DA694/TopicalQuestions#contribution-04BEC029-9AD1-426C-B958-2889A75BBFA5>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answers

Iran: Middle East Terror Groups

Greg Smith (Conservative): What assessment she has made of the implications for regional security of Iran's potential support for terror groups in the Middle East. (903843)

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): The UK has long condemned Iran's regional destabilising activities. We regularly raise our concerns at the United Nations, most recently doing so on 9 August. We support the security of our allies in the middle east, including defence partnerships and capability building. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed continued security collaboration with her Saudi counterparts on 20 October and her Israeli counterparts on 19 October.

Greg Smith: ... Iran remains the world's leading sponsor of terror groups, including those committed to the destruction of Israel, and continues to enjoy impunity for its actions. Does my right hon. Friend share my concern that having a nuclear weapon would give Iran the ultimate protection to spread its malign influence in the region? Will he confirm that the UK will keep all options on the table to stop Iran becoming a nuclear power?

James Cleverly: I can assure my hon. Friend that our priority remains to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability. Sadly, Iran's nuclear programme has never been more advanced, and it is more worrying today than perhaps it has

ever been. We regularly call strongly on Iran to halt all activities in violation of the joint comprehensive plan of action without delay and take the opportunity in front of it at the Vienna talks to restore the JCPOA. The current offer cannot remain on the table indefinitely.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/56DE00AD-AEA3-4825-BB6C-E5C1B9C6CDA6/IranMiddleEastTerrorGroups>

House of Commons Written Answer

Racial Discrimination: UN Resolutions

Sam Tarry (Labour) [58562] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason the UK voted against the UN Resolution A/RES/75/237 calling for action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Amanda Milling: The UK Government is committed to tackling all forms of racism, including antisemitism. We could not agree with the multiple references to the Durban Conference in the UN resolution, given our historic concerns over antisemitism related to that Conference. We also could not accept language welcoming the recent commemorative event in New York, which the UK and many other states did not attend, because of those concerns.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-18/58562>

The UN Resolution referred to above can be read at

<https://undocs.org/A/RES/75/237>

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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>

Public Bill Committee

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/fa4cf2ea-9af7-4ac5-8a9d-828f060d58d8/NationalityAndBordersBill\(NinthSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/fa4cf2ea-9af7-4ac5-8a9d-828f060d58d8/NationalityAndBordersBill(NinthSitting))

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