House of Lords Written Answer

Faith Schools: Admissions

Lord Taverne (Liberal Democrat) [HL3846] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of schools practising religiously selective admissions; what proportion of school places are subject to such selection; and what plans they have, if any, to include this information in school statistics.

Baroness Barran: Over one third of state funded schools in England are designated as having a religious character, although not all include faith-based oversubscription criteria in their admission arrangements.

The department does not collect information on the number of schools that include faith-based criteria in their admission arrangements, nor the proportion of places allocated on the basis of faith. We have no plans to collect this information or to include this information in school statistics.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-08/hl3846

Department of Health and Social Care and UK Health Security Agency

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Updated guidance for funerals and commemorative events during the coronavirus pandemic

Holocaust

House of Lords Written Answer

Education: Holocaust

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL3726] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission Report, published on 27 January 2015, what steps they are taking towards implementing its recommendations.

Lord Greenhalgh: The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation has been established to advise the Government on the recommendations made by the Holocaust Commission in their 2015 report. Good progress is being made with the implementation of that report and updates on specific elements will be provided at the appropriate time.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-04/hl3726

The report referred to above can be read at

Israel

Westminster Hall Debate

Palestine: Road Map to Peace

col 305WH [Relevant documents: e-petition 585314, Introduce sanctions against Israel, e-petition 585313, UK Government to formally recognise the State of Palestine, e-petition 300450, Call for the UK Government to formally recognise the State of Palestine, and e-petition 585309, Condemn Israel for their treatment of Palestine and Palestinians.]

Tahir Ali (Labour): … The most recent round of violence between Israel and Palestine cost countless lives. The attack on Al-Aqsa mosque by Israeli authorities sparked a wave of violence that culminated with renewed bombing in Gaza. This violence has emerged as a result of the ongoing injustices faced by Palestinian people, injustices which continue to make peace in the region impossible. For months, Palestinian families have been illegally evicted from their homes and businesses in several historically Palestinian neighbourhoods in east Jerusalem. Those evictions are being driven by illegal state-backed settler organisations whose sole aim is to displace all Palestinians from their rightful home in east Jerusalem.

This process goes hand in hand with the growth and consolidation of illegal Israeli settlements on the west bank and Golan Heights and the land that was stolen from Palestinian families. If we are serious about achieving a lasting and just peace between Palestine and Israel, it is abundantly clear that the injustices, such as the evictions in east Jerusalem, must be stopped and all land stolen from the Palestinian people must be returned to them.

The UK Government can certainly play a positive and leading role in working out a road map to peace in Palestine. First, our trade relationships with Israel mean that we can make use of sanctions to exert leverage over the Israeli Government to ensure that the human and civil rights of Palestinians are respected and that all illegally seized land is returned.

col 306WH It is unfortunate to have to resort to sanctions, but it is clear from the ongoing violence and evictions that imposing sanctions is the start of the process to bring about change in the region. …
Furthermore, I believe it is time for the UK to follow many other countries around the world in finally recognising the state of Palestine. Many like to speak about the two-state solution to the conflict, but how can we commit to that if we do not even recognise Palestine as a rightful state? Moreover, how can peace be achieved if Israel refuses to recognise the state of Palestine? …

When speaking of a road map to peace in Palestine, we must consider what we can do to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and ensure that diplomacy and dialogue can defeat the drive towards more violence. A meaningful peace process between Israel and Palestine can occur only when the two meet as equal partners, which in turn can occur only when the rights of Palestinians are upheld and respected, when illegally occupied lands are returned and when the sovereignty of Palestinian people is recognised. …

Mark Hendrick (Labour Co-op): … in 2003 when the first road map to peace was introduced, there were some 50,000 settlers occupying the west bank. Eighteen years on, there are now close to half a million. … Does my hon. Friend not feel that the situation is far worse now than it was when the road map was first talked about, and is it not the case that we have seen Israeli Prime Ministers since who are not interested in the two-state solution, but instead in a one-state solution, and that is Israel?

Tahir Ali: … progress can be made, but only if the peace process is rec centred around the human rights of Palestinian people rather than simply on territorial or security considerations. …

col 307WH The peace process must centre around equality, non-discrimination, participation, and accountability and the rule of law. … Instead of focusing on security and stability, the international community should be seeking strategies that instead focus on human lives and the rights and wellbeing of individuals and families. …

That humanitarian approach, however, is clearly not being adopted by Israel, Palestine or the international community as a whole. … Only if Israel recognises the humanitarian injustices being committed against Palestinians can new steps be taken towards peace. …

Jim Shannon (DUP): … In May 1948, Israel was attacked by multiple Arab armies. In ’67, it was forced to defend itself when Arab armies again gathered on its borders to attack. In 1973, it was attacked on Yom Kippur. In between those events and since 1973, Israel has been at the centre of more acts of terror than any other nation in the world. …

col 308WH I do not support early-day motion 300, calling on the UK not to sell arms to the most threatened state on the planet. … Some of my fellow parliamentarians … want to strip the world’s only Jewish state of the means to defend itself. …

First, Fatah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Palestinian Authority must accept and respect Israel’s right to exist; there is no other starting point. Secondly, all armed terror groups must lay down their weapons. Thirdly, peace talks without preconditions on either side must be opened to reach a full and final peace settlement between the state of Israel and the Palestinians. …

Kim Leadbeater (Labour): … The illegal occupation continues, and the dignity and human rights of the Palestinian people are trampled on each and every day. …

There are clearly people of good will and good sense in both Israel and Palestine who recognise that, and their voices must be heard as we work towards a two-state solution of an independent internationally recognised Palestine alongside a safe and secure Israel. …

col 309WH We have a decision to make. Will we condemn another generation of Palestinians to a future full of fear, insecurity and hopelessness? Or will we stand shoulder to shoulder with those demanding the democratic space to criticise the status quo and defend the human rights of a people who deserve better than continued oppression and suffering because political leaders lack the courage to recognise that a better future is possible?

Jeremy Corbyn (Labour): … The principal point must be that Britain should give unconditional full recognition to the state of Palestine. … Most countries around the world
have no problem with that and have recognised the state of Palestine, as does the United Nations …

The occupation of the west bank by Israel has gone on since 1967. Let us try to imagine what it is like to live under occupation. Everywhere someone goes there is a checkpoint, an occupying force or a soldier who will stop them. A law that they have not voted for, and that does not have their consent, can be used against them. Many people are in prison for many years and are abominably treated there.

Similarly, the siege of Gaza goes on. … I am always struck by the number of people in Gaza who suffer from profound mental health conditions because of the siege that they are under and the inability to travel or work. It is the most educated population in the world with the highest number of graduates of any country bar none, yet unemployment is between 60% and 70%. …

Some 600,000 people live in settlements. They are industrial and trading complexes and they have taken land and water away from Palestinian farmers. There are settler-only roads, which Archbishop Desmond Tutu recognised was like apartheid where people could not travel on certain roads. They are a breach of international law. …

Jess Phillips (Labour): … My constituents, like many others, have been writing regarding Israel’s decision to criminalise six Palestinian human rights and civil society organisations and label them terrorists. … The accusation is that these are terrorist organisations, despite a 74-page dossier prepared by the Israeli security services providing little concrete evidence of links between Palestinian human rights groups and designated terrorist groups. These organisations include the most well-established Palestinian human rights groups that work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. They provide healthcare to the most vulnerable communities, they organise legal support for those detained and they collect evidence of human rights violations—which I suspect is where the problem is.

The work that these organisations undertake is integral to supporting the most vulnerable and to understanding the reality on the ground for Palestinian people. …

Andy Slaughter (Labour): … I want to ask the Minister to respond on the subject of the most egregious barriers to the peace process.

The first is recognition, which this House overwhelmingly voted for seven years ago. That should be a precondition—an attempt to negotiate on equal terms. The second is the establishment of new settlements. There are 13,000 about to be approved, and it is not just what is being approved; it is where. These are strategically placed to cut off East Jerusalem from Ramallah, or they are being built 20 km inside the west bank to ensure that a two-state solution becomes impossible.

What are the Government saying on settler violence, which is now endemic? … Those attacks are specifically designed to terrorise Palestinian farmers or force them off their land. Why are we trading with illegal settlements? We are not talking about boycotts here; we are talking about settlements that are illegal under international law, but which the Government will do nothing to prevent British companies profiting from.

What has the Government’s response been to the six non-governmental organisations—respected civil rights and human rights organisations—being banned by the Israeli Government? What are they doing about the all-time highs in evictions and demolitions? …

Florence Eshalomi (Labour Co-op): … Peace in Palestine will never be found with the discrimination against and suppression of many people in the area. The actions will simply lead to resentment and the continuation of the toxic atmosphere that has allowed the current situation to exist for far too long. …

Both Israelis and Palestinians have the right to exist, and they can do so in a safe space. However, to do that, our Government and Governments across the world need to work tirelessly to facilitate the de-escalation of the conflict. …
Steve McCabe (Labour): … We are told we must recognise Palestine, but what Palestine? Is it the bit controlled by the Palestinian Authority, or the bit under military occupation by Hamas? What kind of state would we be recognising, given its current condition? Why is it impossible, in a debate like this, to recognise that there is a new coalition Government in Israel? Why is it impossible to look at the arguments about the “economy for security” plan that was announced recently? Why are the Abraham accords automatically dismissed? …

I hear people talk about recognition and sanctions; what I want to know is, when people are chanting, “From the river to the sea”, what do they think that actually means? We all know that it actually means the dismemberment of Israel—Israel not having a right to exist. No one can back that and a two-state solution simultaneously.

I genuinely want a two-state solution. I genuinely want peace. However, I also want recognition that the state of play is that Hamas is supported and financed by the Iranian revolutionary guard, and that its objective is the destruction of the state of Israel. We have to bear that in mind. …

Andy McDonald (Labour): … The human rights group B’Tselem has documented a staggering 451 incidents of settler violence against Palestinians since early 2020, and Israeli forces failed to intervene to stop the attacks in two thirds of cases. …

col 313WH There is no other way to look at this than as a state-sanctioned project of colonisation and ethnic cleansing. …

The crime of apartheid cannot be allowed to stand, but thanks to the international community offering little more than hollow words of condemnation, the Israeli authorities wilfully continue to break the law, safe in the knowledge that they will not face the repercussion of proper sanctions.

If the Government will not provide moral and substantial leadership on this issue, it will be up to civil society to do so, through the boycott of, and divestment from, companies engaged in violations of Palestinian human rights. The Government need to lead the international community in providing more than mere denunciations. We need actions and sanctions, and we need them now.

Tommy Sheppard (SNP): … the Israeli state is occupying the lands designated to become the Palestinian state. Not only is it militarily occupying them, but it has no policy objective to ever end that occupation. Secondly, as has been referred to, the programme of settler colonisation has seen more than 600,000 people move into the militarily occupied areas, which has led to the displacement of the Palestinian populations that were there. The infrastructure that comes with that results in the de facto annexation of the territory, even if it is not legally claimed. Thirdly, there is the question of Jerusalem, as has been indicated. There is what can only be called the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian communities to remove them from the east of In East Jerusalem. That has been given a veneer of legitimacy and respectability by Israel’s law, although that law would not pass any international test of fairness.

col 314WH Finally, the Israeli Government are, as a matter of policy, systematically trying to reduce and deny the capacity of Palestinian society to represent itself politically. That is why the recent criminalisation of six non-violent civil organisations is of so much concern. …

If somebody says that they believe in a two-state solution in the middle east, and yet they do nothing—make no comment, take no action—about the things that are happening to actively undermine that objective, they are being insincere and not serious.

Our Government have to be seen to be taking action to make sure that the conditions are brought about in which a two-state solution could become a reality once again. First, they need to fully implement UN resolution 2334, and make a distinction between Israel proper and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, given the settlement economy that is going on there. The Government should take serious economic action to end economic trade with
settlements in the occupied areas that sustain the occupation. Secondly, as has been said, we should recognise the state of Palestine. Why not? If we believe that it should exist, we should recognise it, and try to help it and develop it, so that it becomes a proper state. Our not doing that puts the Palestinians always at a disadvantage.

Finally, it is time to understand that Israel, as a matter of Government policy, has been conducting its activities with impunity for many years in breach of international law. Its military action is in breach of the Geneva convention, and it has been undertaken with no sanction and no impediment. That must stop. …

**col 315WH Wayne David (Labour):** … I am absolutely clear that there must be a negotiated peace. There are some who seek to destroy the state of Israel, and some who wish to deny any kind of statehood to the Palestinian people. Those who hold such views are profoundly wrong. Our aim should be the creation of a viable Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel that can live in peace. …

I condemn the labelling of the six non-governmental organisations in Palestine as terrorist organisations by the Defence Minister of Israel, and I ask the Government to respond to that point, rather than take the holding position of, “We’ll see what the evidence is.” Others who have been told by the Israeli Government that there is evidence are yet to see it, and there is no evidence at all, I suspect, to justify that designation …

Britain and the international community have to focus on a number of principles and key positions, so that we lay the groundwork for an eventual peace. Those must include, first, an adherence to the rule of international law—not ifs, no buts. There must be an adherence to international law by all parties, including the Palestinians, and including the state of Israel. Moreover, the forced evictions of Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah and other communities in east Jerusalem and the west bank must stop. …

The second principle is that the city of Jerusalem must be shared by Israelis and Palestinians. The annexation of east Jerusalem by Israel cannot be accepted. Those two principles are the cornerstones on which any future negotiation has to be based. …

**col 316WH Jim Shannon:** … Israel is surrounded by enemies; there are rocket attacks and terrorist attacks on a regular basis.

Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the protection of Israel’s own people needs to be ensured before anything can happen?

**Wayne David:** Absolutely. I am a strong supporter of the state of Israel, as I am of a future state of Palestine. The state of Israel has a right to protect itself against Hamas, or anybody else for that matter, as any other state has according to international law. …

The time is right for the state of Palestine to be recognised. …

We also need to press firmly for elections to be held in Palestine, so that those who are elected have a clear mandate to negotiate on behalf of their people. …

I know that some Members have reservations about the Abraham accords, but they nevertheless exist, and we must use them as an opportunity to encourage the United Arab Emirates and others to raise the issue of Palestine directly with the Israelis. This is a new opportunity, and we must take every advantage of it. …

**col 317WH** It is important for our Government to recognise that the peace process is a process. It will not happen overnight, and nor will it happen over weeks or months. It will happen over years, and it is absolutely essential that the groundwork is done to ensure that there is rapprochement between people on the ground. …

… it is extremely important that the Government give their full-hearted support to the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. I know the Government say they support it, but … the Government have the opportunity to give their full-hearted support and to take up one of the seats on the board. They can support the initiative that has come from America to ensure that the essential groundwork is done, so that the Israeli people and the Palestinian people learn to come closer together. …
The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Vicky Ford): … The UK’s position on the middle east peace process is long standing and well known. We support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as a shared capital. … We also believe that the best way to make progress towards such a resolution is through bilateral negotiations that take account of the legitimate concerns of both sides.

col 318WH We remain in close consultation with international partners to encourage a regional approach to peace. We are working through multilateral institutions, including the UN, to support resolutions and policies that encourage both sides to take steps that rebuild trust, which will be crucial if dialogue is to succeed. To that end, we welcome recent engagements between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian leadership. … We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of a two-state solution, including acts of terrorism, antisemitic incitement, settlement expansion, and the demolition of Palestinian property on the west bank, including East Jerusalem. … We are in contact with the Government of Israel to understand the basis of the designations of six civil society organisations. We have made it clear that human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in the development of thriving and open societies. … The UK remains resolute in its commitment to Israel’s security. We condemn Hamas’s indiscriminate rocket attacks, and Israel does have a legitimate right to self-defence, but in exercising that right, it is vital that all actions are proportionate and in line with international humanitarian law. …

The UK does not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including Israeli settlements, as part of Israel, so, for example, goods imported from the settlements are not permitted to benefit from trade preferences under the UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement. … Our economic development programme aims to lift the overall standard of living for Palestinians, to increase trade and job creation, to enable greater movement and access for people and goods, and to enhance the supply of electricity and clean water. However, we remain concerned about the ongoing humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which was further exacerbated by the recent conflict and damage to civilian infrastructure. …

col 319WH We also urge access into and out of Gaza, in accordance with international humanitarian law, for humanitarian actors, reconstruction materials and those, including Palestinians, travelling for medical purposes. We remain in close contact with UN agencies and key partners on the ground in order to assess the situation, and we will monitor that situation closely. …

col 320WH … the most important thing is that right now—today—Israel and Palestine are talking, and talking about their future and moving towards peace. We believe, and we make it very clear to Israel, that human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in developing thriving and open societies, and we support them. However, it is important that we continue to make it clear that a strong and vibrant civil society is in Israel’s own interest. …

To conclude, this occupation will not end and peace will not be achieved by symbolic measures. Peace will only be achieved by real movement towards renewed dialogue between the parties that leads to a viable Palestinian state living in peace and security, side by side with Israel …

To read the full transcript see https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-17/debates/298122A6-9FF1-4EE7-872E-D9F05B330D1F/PalestineRoadMapToPeace

The e-petitions referred to above can be read at https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/585314 and
House of Commons Written Answer

Palestinians: Non-governmental Organisations

David Jones (Conservative) [73755] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2021 to Question 62640 on Palestinians: Non-governmental Organisations, whether she has yet obtained additional information to understand the basis for the designations; what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the order referred to in that Question; and if she will make a statement.

James Cleverly: We are in contact with the Government of Israel to understand the basis of the designations. We have made clear that human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including those focused on Israel's conduct in the Palestinian Territories. Israel's long-standing commitment to democratic values is one of its great strengths as a fellow democracy, and we continue to make clear that a strong, vibrant civil society is in Israel's own interest. As a friend of Israel, we are concerned by any developments that may undermine this commitment.

The answer referred to above can be read at https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-12/73755

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

James Cleverly Thank you to Norway and @Ahuitfeldt for hosting the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and international community in Oslo today. I welcomed commitment from the parties to increase dialogue to strengthen economic cooperation and help build the conditions for peace.

James Cleverly Discussed stability across the Middle East with Israeli Minister for Regional Cooperation @EsawiFR yesterday in Oslo. I welcomed the Minister’s commitment to re-establish the Joint Economic Committee as a key mechanism for Israeli-Palestinian dialogue on economic issues.

James Cleverly Yesterday @DrShtayyeh and I met in Oslo to discuss initiatives to improve the economic situation in the OPTs. I made clear that supporting economic development and stability remains a priority for the @FCDOGovUK

James Cleverly At the International Conference on @UNRWA, I reiterated UK’s long-standing and continued support for the work they do. Important we support UNRWA to
United Nations

‘Solutions Journalism’ Offers Press More Constructive Role in Covering Conflict, Panellists Say as International Media Seminar on Middle East Peace Concludes

Daoud Kuttab [Director General of the Community Media Network] ... voiced his disagreement with a view that the public is tired of bad news. Indeed, it loves bad news, prompting the media to continue publishing it. What he likes about solutions journalism is that, unlike peace journalism, it does not veer away from the first fundamental of journalism, which is to seek truth. Stories must conclude with solutions, “not singular but plural”, he stressed, adding that options must be presented along with their associated economic, political, financial and cultural costs. He advocated for more journalists practicing solutions journalism, which has not often been seen on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. …

Eetta Prince-Gibson [former Editor-in-Chief of The Jerusalem Report] ... Describing “compassion fatigue”, ... said she does not know what audiences want any longer. Defining problems in specific terms and articulating them is critical, she said, suggesting that “the conflict” or “the occupation” be broken down into solvable components. There should also be examples of similar problems facing religious groups in conflict. …

Dina Aboughazala [founder of Egab — a platform specializing in solutions journalism in the Middle East and North Africa] ... said a solutions story ... offers insight, making the response relevant to other situations. ... [She] urged a closer look inside the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It has been 20 years since a two-State solution was first laid out. That is enough time to assess how it is working, what insights can be drawn and what its limitations are. ... she pointed out that fewer solutions stories are coming out of Gaza and the West Bank than from Israel. She went on to stress the need to correct that imbalance, emphasizing that solutions journalism helps each side to see the perspectives of the other and also enables the media to portray each side in a new light. …

Mr. Kuttab said he believes in solutions journalism, but journalism cannot solve problems. At the end of the day, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be resolved by journalists. Emphasizing that members of the media need a little bit of humility, he said comparison between media in Israel and Palestine is not meaningful because the former has a thriving industry while the latter is just a group of individuals. …

Ms. Prince-Gibson, stressing the importance of creating space for practitioners to learn from each other, drew attention to “O2O2”, a service that translates articles from Arabic into Hebrew and vice versa. …

To read the full press release see

TOP

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 (Assemblies) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878

** Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862
House of Lords Library Briefing
https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/freedom-of-speech-in-universities/

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

Consultations ** new or updated today

Labelling for Animal Welfare (closing date 6 December 2021)
Proposed Assisted Dying for Terminally ill Adults (Scotland) Bill (closing date 22 December 2021)

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

Marriage Law (Northern Ireland) (closing date 18 February 2022)

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (closing date not stated)

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