



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Debate

Conduct of the Right Hon. Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip

col 850 Jonathan Gullis (Conservative): I am hoping that the hon. Lady [Anneliese Dodds] will use this opportunity to apologise to my predecessor Ruth Smeeth for the bullying and harassment that she faced from Labour party members simply for being Jewish.

Anneliese Dodds (Labour): ... when the Labour party finds action that is inappropriate, we act. We have changed our systems. We have made sure that we comply with what is required of us. ...

col 852 Robert Largan (Conservative): I was not planning to contribute to the debate, but the hon. Lady [Anneliese Dodds] ... said earlier in her speech that when the Labour party sees people breaking the rules, it acts. I have written to the hon. Lady twice, and I have written to the Leader of the Opposition a number of times over the last few months, about her former flatmate Ruth George, who has an atrocious record when it comes to anti-Jewish racism. It was she who said, when Luciana Berger quit the Labour party, that she and other members of her group were funded by Israel. Will the hon. Lady respond now to that conflict of interest, and agree that she should not be in the Labour party any more?

Anneliese Dodds (Labour): ... as the hon. Member stated in his own letter, those issues have been taken up and dealt with. [*Interruption.*] He said that in his own letter. Perhaps he needs to go back and reread it. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-30/debates/DA41937F-F795-4A37-8C9E-9940192FBC64/ConductOfTheRightHonMemberForUxbridgeAndSouthRuislip>

House of Commons Written Answers

Judaism: Ministers of Religion

Ruth Jones (Labour) [83475] To ask the Prime Minister, when he last met the Chief Rabbi.

Boris Johnson: Formal Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published each quarter on gov.uk.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-29/83475>

Information about ministerial meetings, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministers-transparency-publications#2021>

Islam: Religious Hatred

Ruth Jones (Labour) [79477] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department took to mark Islamophobia Awareness Month 2021.

Kemi Badenoch: Islamophobia awareness is vitally important. Our commitment to tackling the discrimination and intolerance in Muslim communities is consistent throughout the year, as every community should be able to practice their faith in freedom and security.

We already have some of the strongest legislation in the world to tackle hate crime and, where groups incite racial hatred or are engaged in racially or religiously motivated criminal activity, we would expect them to be prosecuted. We have continued to show our commitment to this by supporting Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with over £4 million between 2017 and 2022 to monitor anti-Muslim hate crimes and support victims, as well as providing almost £5 million to protect and secure mosques and other places of worship through the Places of Worship Security Grant.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-22/79477>

House of Lords Written Answers

Marriage: Religion

Baroness Cox (Crossbench) [HL4074] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ascertain the number of British citizens currently united in religious-only marriages.

Lord True: The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have, therefore, asked the Authority to respond. ...

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing marriage statistics for England and Wales. The most recent year for which marriage statistics are available is 2018¹. National Records Scotland (NRS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) are responsible for publishing marriage statistics for marriages registered in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

An annual breakdown of the number of religious marriages which took place in England and Wales is available. A religious marriage is defined as a marriage solemnised in certified places of worship that are registered for marriage, and is carried out in accordance with the rites and ceremonies of a religious denomination. To provide the number of British citizens currently united in religious-only marriages would potentially require changes to the civil registration process, as information about the nationality of individuals marrying is not provided to the ONS by the General Register Office, and this information is not collected during the marriage registration process.

Table 1 provides the number of religious marriages registered in England and Wales for each year for the period 2008 to 2018. It is important to note that these counts may be an underestimate as some marriages (such as Muslim and Sikh) undertaken in accordance with the rites and ceremonies of a religious denomination, may take place at unregistered premises. Such marriages do not meet the legal requirements needed in England and Wales for a religious marriage and are recorded as civil marriages. ...

Table 1: Number of religious marriages² registered³ in England and Wales⁴, 2008 to 2018⁵

Year	Number of religious marriages
2008	78,498
2009	76,493
2010	78,128
2011	74,452
2012	79,473
2013	68,600
2014	68,051
2015	62,658
2016	60,069
2017	54,346
2018	48,181

Source: Office for National Statistics

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/datasets/marriagesinenglandandwales2013>

² Marriage statistics are derived from information recorded when marriages are registered as part of civil registration, a legal requirement.

³ Figures include opposite-sex and same-sex marriages registered in England and Wales.

⁴ Figures exclude marriages to residents of England and Wales that took place abroad.

⁵ The latest marriage statistics available for are for 2018. It is currently only possible to publish final annual marriage statistics around 26 months after the end of the reference year due to delays in the submission of marriage entries by the clergy and registrars.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-16/hl4074>

Schools: Registration

Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat) [HL4441] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reasons why unregistered and illegal schools continue to operate in England.

Baroness Barran: It is a criminal offence under section 96 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to conduct an independent educational institution unless it is registered. Section 97 of that Act permits no-notice inspections of settings believed to be operating in breach of this registration requirement.

Between 1 January 2016 and 31 August 2021, 114 settings inspected under section 97 were identified as operating as an unregistered independent school. Joint work between the Department for Education and Ofsted has led to 101 of these settings changing their provision, meaning they no longer operate unlawfully, in breach of the 2008 Act. In that time, groups responsible for operating illegal settings have

been successfully prosecuted five times.

The department and Ofsted continue to investigate and, if needs be, prosecute those conducting any settings where intelligence or evidence suggests the operation of an unregistered school.

The department consulted in 2020 on extending the registration requirement to settings that operate full time but only offer a very narrow curriculum, which are currently allowed to operate without registration. The department will respond to this consultation soon, setting out next steps. The department has also committed to taking forward measures to make it easier to investigate and prosecute such settings, including in the 2019 Integrated Communities Action Plan. The department intends to take forward such measures when a suitable legislative opportunity arises.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-25/hl4441>

Downing Street

Boris Johnson This is disturbing footage. Racism of any kind will never be tolerated in our society and we will continue to do all we can to root it out.

Links to a report: "Video has emerged of a group of men spitting at a bus full of Jewish teenagers in Oxford Street where the group were celebrating the first night of Chanukah"

<https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1466340479692423168>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service

Terrorist who threatened to set fire to Islamic Centre jailed

A man who was convicted of terrorism offences after threatening to set fire to an Islamic Centre has been jailed.

Sam Imrie posted messages to the web forum Telegram on 4 July 2019. He drove to the Fife Islamic Centre in Glenrothes and posted images and footage showing the outside of the building.

Imrie then drove to an abandoned building in Thornton and filmed himself setting fire to the doorway, before posting the video and pretending it was an Islamic centre.

The 24-year-old had earlier set fire to a headstone at a cemetery in Markinch, filming the blaze.

Imrie posted numerous messages on Telegram which glorified terrorist acts carried out by Anders Brevik and Brenton Tarrant and contained offensive comments about Muslim and Jewish communities. ...

On Thursday, he was sentenced to a total of 7 years and 6 months in prison. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.copfs.gov.uk/media-site/media-releases/2001-terrorist-who-threatened-to-set-fire-to-islamic-centre-jailed>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

Holocaust Memorial Day

Ruth Jones (Labour) [79478] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2022.

Kemi Badenoch: Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for the whole nation to remember the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered by the Nazis, along with all other victims of Nazi persecution and victims of subsequent genocides. The Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) supports the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust who will be promoting a great many local events as well as a national commemoration which will take place as an on-line event on 27 January.

DLUHC will itself be organising an event to enable staff to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-22/79478>

House of Lords Written Answer

UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL4079] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay on 15 November (HL3617), what assessment they have made of the plans for the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in respect of protecting access to green spaces, including Victoria Tower Gardens.

Lord Greenhalgh: We look forward to the completion of the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, including the improvements that development will bring to the quality and accessibility of Victoria Tower Gardens.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-16/hl4079>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-02/hl3617>

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Israel

House of Commons Oral Answers

Israeli-Palestinian Peace Fund and Designation of Organisations

Marsha De Cordova (Labour): What discussions [the Minister] has had with her counterpart in the Government of Israel on the designation of certain Palestinian civil society organisations as terrorist groups. (904443)

Andrew Gwynne (Labour): If [the Minister] will take steps to support the creation of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace. (904457)

The Minister for Asia (Amanda Milling): The decision by the Israeli authorities to designate six Palestinian NGOs, and the evidence that forms the basis of those designations, is a matter for the Government of Israel. The UK maintains its own criteria for designation. We continue engagement with a number of those organisations on human rights issues and respect the role that NGOs and civil society organisations play in upholding human rights and democracy.

We are in contact with the Alliance for Middle East Peace regarding its concept of an international fund. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, my right hon. Friend the Member for Braintree (James Cleverly), met it on 8 September to discuss that.

Marsha De Cordova: It has been more than five weeks since Israel designated six well-known and respected Palestinian NGOs and human rights organisations, and there is still no credible evidence to justify it. The EU has said that it has received no new evidence and no convincing answers to its queries. Does the Minister share my concern that the designation of these NGOs is a clear attempt to silence the peaceful defence of Palestinian rights, and will she call on the Israeli Government to immediately revoke the designation?

Amanda Milling: As I set out, the decision to designate these six Palestinian NGOs is a matter for the Government of Israel. The UK maintains its own criteria for designation. We continue engagement with a number of these organisations on human rights issues and respect the role of civil society organisations in upholding human rights and democracy. As I say, it is a matter for the Government of Israel, but we have our own position.

Andrew Gwynne: On the creation of an international fund for Israeli and Palestinian peace, the Government have previously said that they have not yet committed to join the fund because the US has “not yet approached us to discuss it.”

Why has the Minister not shown some initiative and contacted United States Agency for International Development administrator Samantha Power about taking one of the two international board seats to support this exciting opportunity for collaboration?

Amanda Milling: As I mentioned, the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa met the executive director of ALLMEP on 8 September, and UK officials are in contact with it to better understand the concept of the international fund. The UK Government share the objective of increasing understanding and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

Alyn Smith (SNP): I listened carefully to the Minister’s answer and I have to say, frankly, that it was entirely inadequate and wholly unconvincing. It is telling that, in answering the previous question, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, the hon. Member for Chelmsford (Vicky Ford), praised the role of NGOs in other countries, yet we are seeing NGOs being shut down in the state of Israel on entirely dubious legal grounds, with no evidence base, and the UK Minister seems to be washing her hands of the matter. I am offering my support to the UK Government, as are Labour Members. Surely we must do more to create and help save the civil space within the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. These six NGOs are fulfilling that. Have the UK Government seen the evidence, and will they commit to helping to keep that civil space open?

Amanda Milling: As my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary mentioned, civil society is important. We continue our engagement with a number of these organisations on important human rights issues, and we respect the role of NGOs and civil society in upholding human rights and democracy.

Michael Fabricant (Conservative): Most of us on the Conservative side of the House welcome the Government’s decision to proscribe the so-called political wing of Hamas, but will my right hon. Friend outline the pact that has been drawn up following the visit of the Israeli Foreign Minister to the United Kingdom a couple of days ago?

Amanda Milling: As my hon. Friend said, the Foreign Secretary hosted the first UK-Israel strategic dialogue with Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid. They held substantial discussions on how to broaden and deepen our bilateral relationship, including by co-operation across science, technology, trade and innovation.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-30/debates/AE11C5D9-5B91-4DFD-B2BC-B0288CA2100D/Israeli-PalestinianPeaceFundAndDesignationOfOrganisations>

Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Fiona Bruce (Conservative): If [the Minister] will make a statement on her departmental responsibilities. (904464)

The Minister for Asia (Amanda Milling): Since the last oral questions the Foreign Secretary has ... hosted the first UK-Israel strategic dialogue with her Israel counterpart Yair Lapid in London. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-30/debates/7A5FD10E-1121-4BF6-BAD8-59943CE3E3BC/TopicalQuestions>

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Foreign Relations

Robert Largan (Conservative) [904453] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps she has taken to strengthen the UK's economic and security relationship with Israel.

Amanda Milling: Just yesterday ... the Foreign Secretary hosted the first UK-Israel strategic dialogue with Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid. They held substantive discussions on how to broaden and deepen the bilateral relationship, including cooperation across science, technology, trade and innovation. The Foreign Secretary and Foreign Minister Lapid also signed an MOU, committing to the development of a UK-Israel Bilateral Roadmap that will define bilateral cooperation for the next decade. We hope to agree the Roadmap in 2022.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-24/904453>

The MOU referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-israel-strategic-partnership-memorandum-of-understanding-2021/memorandum-of-understanding-between-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-of-israel-and-the-uk-foreign-commonwealth-development-office-on-the-uk-israel-s>

Trade Agreements

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [79331] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress her Department has made in securing free trade agreements.

Ranil Jayawardena: We have made great progress in securing trade deals around the world; to date, we have agreed deals with 70 countries, plus the EU, covering trade worth £766 billion last year.

This year, we signed a new deal with the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and we have reached Agreement-in-Principle with both Australia and New Zealand.

We have begun the accession process for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP); are preparing for negotiations with India, Canada and Mexico; and have also launched a public consultation on a trade deal with the Gulf Cooperation Council. We are due to begin work next year on an enhanced and improved FTA with Israel too.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-22/79331>

West Bank: Palestinians

Stephen Timms (Labour) [82267] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the Israeli High Court's decision on 1 September 2021 relating to the West Bank that Palestinian homes can be entered without a warrant but that settlers' homes cannot.

James Cleverly: We are aware of the Israel's High Court's decision on a petition seeking to limit the Israeli military's power to enter and search Palestinian homes in the West Bank. The UK continues to engage with the Israeli government on

human rights issues in the context of the occupation. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinians. 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/2021-11-26/82267>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The United Kingdom's position on the status of Jerusalem is clear and long-standing: Explanation of vote delivered by Fergus Eckersley, UK Political Coordinator at the UN, at the General Assembly vote on resolution A/76/L.16

The United Kingdom's position on the status of Jerusalem is clear and long-standing: it should be determined in a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The final determination of Jerusalem must ensure that the holy city is a shared capital of Israel and a Palestinian state, granting access and religious rights for all who hold it dear. The United Kingdom opposes unilateral action in Jerusalem absent a final status settlement and remains supportive of the historic status quo.

The UK recognises that Jerusalem and the holy sites at Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount hold particular significance for many groups around the globe, especially the three Abrahamic faiths of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The UK welcomes language in the resolution reaffirming the special significance of the holy sites and the City of Jerusalem for these three religions and calling for respect for the historic Status Quo.

However, the resolution adopted today refers to the holy sites in Jerusalem in purely Islamic terms, without recognising the Jewish terminology of "Temple Mount". The UK has made clear for many years that we disagree with this approach, and while we welcome the removal of the majority of these references, we are disappointed that we were unable to find a solution to the final instance. On principle, the United Kingdom has therefore moved our vote today from a "yes" to an "abstention". If the unbalanced reference had been removed, the UK would have been ready and willing to vote "yes".

The United Kingdom is clear that this should not be understood to be a reflection of a change in UK policy towards Jerusalem, but instead as an important signal of our commitment to recognising the history of Jerusalem for the three monotheistic religions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-united-kingdoms-position-on-the-status-of-jerusalem-is-clear-and-long-standing>

In the absence of a political solution, it is vital that we improve conditions for Israelis and Palestinians: Statement by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East

... Let me reaffirm at the outset that the UK remains firmly committed to a two-state solution, based on 1967 lines and with Jerusalem as a shared capital. In the absence of a political solution, it is vital that we continue to support efforts to improve conditions on the ground and promote stability for Israelis and Palestinians alike. ...

Mr President, on 19 November, the UK Government proscribed Hamas in its entirety as a terrorist organisation, including its political wing. We remain clear that Hamas must renounce violence, recognise Israel and accept previously signed agreements. These conditions remain the benchmark against which its intentions should be judged.

I offer my condolences to the family of an Israeli civilian, Eliyahu Kay, who was killed in Jerusalem on 21 November, reportedly by a member of Hamas. We condemn Hamas' continued attacks against civilians, which are unacceptable and unjustifiable.

The decision by the Israeli authorities to designate six Palestinian NGOs, and the evidence which forms the basis of these designations, is a matter for the Government of Israel. The

UK maintains its own criteria for designation. We continue engagement with a number of these organisations on human rights issues and respect the role that NGOs and civil society organisations play in upholding human rights and democracy. ...

As we reiterated at the International Ministerial Conference on 16 November, the UK remains a firm supporter of UNRWA and values its importance as a vital humanitarian and stabilising force in the region. ...

We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians; this deteriorating trend must be reversed. We welcome Israeli authorities' discussion of how to address this issue, and urge Israel to bring those responsible to justice and end the culture of impunity. We continue to call on the Government of Israel to reverse its decisions of 24 and 27 October, to advance the construction of settlement units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The settlements being advanced around Jerusalem are a threat to the viability of a future Palestinian state and, therefore, to peace and stability.

Mr President, peace will be achieved only through real movement towards renewed dialogue between the parties. We encourage further and deeper engagement in this regard, aimed at creating the foundations for future progress towards a two-state solution.

To read the transcript in full see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/in-the-absence-of-a-political-solution-it-is-vital-that-we-improve-conditions-for-israelis-and-palestinians>

Updated Economic factsheet: Israel

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1036550/Israel_economic_factsheet_2021.pdf

Department for International Trade

Updated Trade and Investment factsheet: Israel

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1036809/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2021-12-01.pdf

Updated Trade and Investment factsheet: Occupied Palestinian Territories

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1036873/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2021-12-01.pdf

United Nations

Adopting 3 Middle East Drafts, General Assembly Calls for Launching Credible Talks on Final Status Issues, Respecting Historic Status Quo of Jerusalem Holy Sites

... **Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia), Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**, introduced its annual report (document A/76/35) ... he said the Committee calls on Israel, the occupying Power, to halt the creeping annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which undermines the contiguity of the Palestinian territory and the physical viability of a two-State solution.

Reaffirming the Committee's support to all relevant stakeholders, he noted the role of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UNRWA and said the Committee will synergize efforts to uphold the permanent responsibility of the Organization towards the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all its aspects. Introducing the draft resolution on "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine" (document A/76/L.14), he said it calls upon all States to not recognize any changes to the pre-1967

borders, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations. The text also calls on States to distinguish in their relevant dealings between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967, and to not render aid or assistance to illegal settlement activities, he added.

Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, underscored that the United Nations has a clear, vital responsibility concerning the question of Palestine, “as the *Nakba* that befell the Palestinian people following the General Assembly’s decision to partition historic Palestine persists seventy-four years later”. Generations have been deprived of their fundamental human rights, endured the misery of exile as refugees and over 50 years of colonial foreign occupation. The consequences of this injustice have defined Palestinian existence in countless ways across generations, one marred by painful hardships, dispossession and loss — “of life and living, of home and homeland, of opportunity and potential, of hope and dreams”. He spotlighted, however, the resilience of the Palestinian people, witnessed again in May as Israel pressed on with its war of colonization, aggression and apartheid against that people in Jerusalem, Gaza and across the Palestinian homeland. ...

As Israel believes that it can violate international law and ignore United Nations resolutions without cost or consequence, it has entrenched its illegal occupation and continued its decades-long scheme to displace and replace the Palestinian people. ...

He detailed how Palestinian civilians are being killed and injured; how thousands of homes have been destroyed by Israeli airstrikes; how Israeli soldiers violently raid Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps daily; and how settler militias and extremists, acting as mercenaries on behalf of the occupation, are terrorizing the Palestinian people. Colonial settlements continue to be constructed ... and Israel continues measures to illegally alter Jerusalem’s demography, character, status, history and identity. Israel has blockaded the Gaza Strip for 15 years, imprisoning over 2 million people in deprivation, and continues to deny the rights of Palestinian refugees — foremost their right of return. ...

Continued violations must have consequences, and it is time to stop appeasing Israel and rewarding its transgressions. States must not be complicit with Israel’s illegal actions and, pursuant to resolution 2334 (2016), they must distinguish between Israel and the territories it has occupied since 1967. ...

Gilad Menashe Erdan (Israel) recalling a recent “act of terror” in Jerusalem that killed a 26-year-old and wounded four others, said the Palestinian authorities and President Mahmoud Abbas had not even bothered to condemn it simply because they are not interested in reconciliation. The three resolutions on which the Assembly would vote have only one purpose, and that is to demonize Israel, he said, calling it an annual package of distorted anti-Israel resolutions that attack Israel and promote the Palestinians’ false narrative. ...

As the only vibrant democracy in the Middle East, he said Israel endures endless attacks, while the Iranian regime, which murders thousands of its citizens, is hardly mentioned. While Syria uses chemical weapons on its citizens and has made millions of them homeless, he said Israel, a beacon of human rights, is the primary focus of the United Nations. “By voting in favor of these resolutions, you are directly contributing to prolonging this conflict,” he stressed.

Noting the transformative progress being made across the Middle East, he said that over a year ago Israel signed peace agreements with three Arab countries — the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco — without any resolutions, condemnations or United Nations intervention. The Abraham Accords have created real people-to-people peace while deepening ties to partners, both new and old. ...

On the Assembly resolutions, he said one of the most absurd demands is the call to maintain the status quo in Jerusalem when the resolution does the exact opposite by referring to the holiest site in Judaism, the Temple Mount, only by its Muslim name. ...

Osama Mahmoud Abdelkhalek Mahmoud (Egypt), introducing the draft resolutions titled

“The Syrian Golan” (A/76/L.15) and “Jerusalem” (A/76/L.16), said the first step to stopping the downward spiral in the Middle East is to put an end to the occupation of all Arab territories occupied on 5 June 1967, specifically the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. ...

... he emphasized that Jerusalem enjoys special status in the Arab and Islamic world. All United Nations resolutions since 1947 have included provisions on the status of the city, however they remain unimplemented in violation of international law. ...

Sudqi Atallah Abd Alkadetr Al Omoush (Jordan) pointed out that Israel's repeated aggressions against Al-Aqsa Mosque are a flagrant violation of international law. He warned against committing such acts on holy places as they could have incalculable repercussions, given the special sensitivity of all Muslims in the world. He reiterated that the Al-Aqsa Mosque is the sole responsibility of Jordan. He stressed that there can be no peace without the complete decolonization of the occupied Syrian Golan. The acts of Israel are null and void, he stated. ...

The representative of the United States said Israelis and Palestinians deserve equal measures of freedom, dignity, security and prosperity both as an end and a means to advance toward a negotiated two-State solution. Stressing that the practice of voting year after year on the same resolutions does nothing to bring the international community closer to that goal, he said most of those texts are unbalanced and undermine the prospect of dialogue and cooperation.

Highlighting an issue regarding the reference to holy sites, he said that “L.16” on Jerusalem only references Haram al-Sharif rather than “Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount”, which is agreed terminology and recognizes the shared and diverse history of the holy site. It is morally, historically and politically wrong for members of the General Assembly to support language that denies both the Jewish and Muslim connections to the Temple Mount and Haram al-Sharif. ...

... **the representative of the United Kingdom** said his Government's position on the status of Jerusalem is clear and long-standing. Its status should be determined in a negotiated settlement between the two parties. ... [\[see above to read this statement in full\]](#)

The representative of the European Union ... considers that whenever “Palestinian government” is mentioned this refers to the Palestinian Authority. The use of the term “Palestine” in any of these resolutions cannot be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue. Expressing concern about the repeated and severe violent incidents at and around the Temple Mount/al-Haram al-Sharif, he called for upholding the status quo put in place in 1967 for Temple Mount/al-Haram al-Sharif in line with previous understandings and with respect to Jordan's special role. Reiterating the need to use both terms — Temple Mount and Haram al-Sharif — to refer to the Temple Mount/al Haram al Sharif in the “Jerusalem” resolution and in other texts, he called on all sides not to deny the historical ties of other religions to the city of Jerusalem and its holy places. ...

... **the Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine** voiced the hope that soon “we will become a full member in the United Nations system because this is our right.” ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/ga12390.doc.htm>

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/76/35)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/76/35>

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (A/76/L.14)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/76/L.14>

The Syrian Golan (A/76/L.15)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/76/L.15>

Security Council, International Community Still Doing Too Little to Steer Israeli-Palestinian Conflict into ‘Calmer Waters’, Briefer Says Amid Heightened Tensions

... **Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process**, said the West Bank is facing a severe fiscal and economic crisis, threatening the stability of Palestinian institutions. Ongoing violence and unilateral steps, including Israeli settlement expansion and demolition of Palestinian structures, continue to raise tensions, feed hopelessness, erode the Palestinian Authority’s standing and further diminish the prospect of a return to meaningful negotiations. In Gaza, the fragile cessation of hostilities continues to hold, but further steps are needed by all parties to ensure a sustainable solution that ultimately enables a return of legitimate Palestinian Government institutions to the strip. ...

... violence continues daily throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, clashes, attacks, search and arrest operations as well as other incidents resulted in the deaths of four Palestinians, including two children, and injuries to 90 others. That included injuries to 12 children caused by Israeli security forces. One Israeli civilian was killed, and nine civilians — including one woman, one child, and six members of the Israeli security forces — were injured. On 5 November, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 15-year-old Palestinian boy during clashes near Nablus. Tensions and clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces also rose in and around Jerusalem’s Old City. On 17 November, a 16-year-old Palestinian stabbed two Israeli security forces personnel, and in response, an Israeli civilian and a security officer shot the perpetrator dead. Meanwhile, on 21 November, a Palestinian man opened fire at Israeli civilians, killing one and injuring two others. Israeli security forces returned fire and killed the attacker.

... settlers and other Israeli civilians in the occupied West Bank perpetrated some 54 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in 26 injuries and damage to property. Palestinians perpetrated 41 attacks against Israeli settlers and other civilians, resulting in 1 death and 9 injuries. On 24 October, Israeli authorities announced tenders for 1,350 housing units ... Several days later, after a hiatus of eight months, Israeli authorities advanced plans for some 3,200 housing units in Area C, with many located in outlying settlements. In a rare development, Israeli authorities also advanced plans for some 6,000 housing units for Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem and 1,300 housing units for Palestinians in Area C. ...

In another concerning development, he recalled that, on 22 October, Israel’s Ministry of Defense announced the designation of six Palestinian non-governmental organizations as terrorist groups, accusing them of constituting an “inseparable arm” of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine ...

Comfort Ero, Interim Vice President and Programme Director of the International Crisis Group, said, over the past year, her organization, which prevents and resolves deadly conflicts, noted with alarm a new onset of violence in Israel and Palestine. In that context, she said the Council and the international community have done “too little to steer this tragic conflict into calmer waters, to protect its victims and to push Israelis and Palestinians toward a just solution”. ...

Israel has grown comfortable with the status quo, imposing its own realities on the ground in violation of Council resolutions, and it has consistently rejected anything resembling a plausible two-State outcome ... Palestinians have seen Israel further entrench its control, denying them their rights and freedoms at a gathering pace. ...

Noting that 29 November marked the seventy-fourth anniversary of General Assembly Resolution 181 and the world’s failure to deliver on its promise of a two-State solution, she

called on the international community to focus less on political paradigms and more on what is happening on the ground. ...

Linda Thomas-Greenfield (United States), recalling her recent visit to Israel, the West Bank and Jordan, said she saw how serious the security situation is for Israel, which is subjected to regular terrorist attacks funded by Iran. Noting that the Council's monthly meetings on the situation in the Middle East focus almost exclusively on Israel's actions, she said the organ's attention should reflect all threats to international peace and security ... and stressed that "Israel does not define the Middle East". She also detailed how serious the security situation is for Palestine, noting stories of Israeli settlers ransacking homes and destroying property in the West Bank. ...

Dmitry A. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) said tensions in the West Bank and Gaza continue unabated ... Noting that the Middle East Quartet is the sole internationally recognized mechanism to facilitate an Israeli-Palestinian settlement, he called on his Quartet colleagues to examine several proposed initiatives, including one concerning an expanded format with the participation of regional States. He went on to express concern over dangerous, unilateral actions such as the seizure and demolition of Palestinian property, expanded settlement activity and arbitrary arrests and detentions. The ongoing construction of settlements can be viewed as the "de facto annexation" of the majority of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. ...

Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom) reaffirmed her country's support for a two-State solution and underscored the importance of supporting efforts to improve conditions on the ground and promote stability in the absence of a political solution. ... [\[see above to read this statement in more detail\]](#)

Wadid Benaabou (France) ... expressed concern over the possible construction of a new settlement north of Jerusalem. He called on Israeli authorities to refrain from pursuing that course of action, noting that it would mark the creation of a new settlement in East Jerusalem for the first time in over 25 years. ... [he] reiterated France's concern over the designation of six Palestinian non-governmental organizations as terrorist organizations and urged all parties to abstain from unilateral measures. ...

Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland) urged Israel to halt all settlement progression and construction ... She voiced concern about the impact on civil society of Israel's designation of six Palestinian non-governmental organizations — including groups supported by Ireland and the European Union — as terrorist entities. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14714.doc.htm>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answer

Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Chris Green (Conservative): I welcomed the Government's decision in 2019 to proscribe the Hezbollah terror group in its entirety, and I welcomed their decision to proscribe the Hamas terror group earlier this month, yet the sanctions lifted under the joint comprehensive plan of action nuclear deal have allowed Iran to provide even greater financial assistance to terrorist proxies and regimes in the region through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Does my right hon. Friend share my view that the IRGC is the nexus of Iran's malign activities around the world? What steps are the Government taking to tackle this problem? (904465)

Amanda Milling: Iran's destabilising activity risks regional peace and prosperity,

and we regularly raise Iran's destabilising role in the region at the UN Security Council. We have more than 200 UK sanctions designations in place against Iran under various UK sanctions regimes, including against the IRGC in its entirety. We continue to support our allies' security, including through close defence partnerships across the middle east. We work to strengthen institutions and build capacity in more vulnerable countries.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-11-30/debates/7A5FD10E-1121-4BF6-BAD8-59943CE3E3BC/TopicalQuestions#contribution-623A3C6D-DB15-438A-9667-B3EC1E600AD7>

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Other Relevant Information

Muslim Council of Britain

British Media's Coverage of Muslims and Islam (2018-2020)

<https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CfMM-Annual-Report-2018-2020-digital.pdf>

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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 (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>

Joint Committee on Human Rights Report: Legislative Scrutiny: National and Borders Bill (Part 3) – Immigration offences and enforcement

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/8021/documents/82695/default/>

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 4 days**

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

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

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/public-consultation-marriage-law>

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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