<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holocaust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relevant Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Home Affairs**

**House of Lords Debate**

*Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill: Third Reading, House of Lords*

*col 15* The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Lord Benyon): … Animal sentience is a matter of scientific fact and it is only right that it is recognised in UK law and properly considered in policy decision-making. …

*col 16* … the animal sentience committee … needs to be referred to in statute to provide for the effective parliamentary accountability that we envisage. By comparison, the existing Animal Welfare Committee advises, rather than scrutinises, Defra and the devolved Governments of Wales and Scotland about particular animal welfare issues that have been remitted to it. Ministers are not required by law to respond to the points made in the reports published by the Animal Welfare Committee, which is not established in legislation. …

*col 17* Lord Herbert of South Downs (Conservative): … The Government rejected every other amendment put to them. We pointed out that sentience is not actually defined in the legislation; apparently that does not matter. What matters is that Ministers must have regard to sentience, even if we do not know what it actually is. We asked for safeguards to ensure the expertise of the committee’s members. We were told that such protections were not necessary. We asked for constraints to the committee’s scope. We were told that limits to the committee’s unfettered remit were not necessary either. Crucially, we asked why the balancing provisions in the Lisbon treaty, which specifically exempt religious rites, cultural traditions and regional heritage, were not included and why the Bill goes so much further than the EU measure it claims to replace. We were told that this balancing provision was not necessary either. …

*col 18* This measure departs from the usual practice of taking careful and specific steps to ensure animal welfare by injecting a broad and ill-defined principle into our public administration. The danger is that, in doing so, it will effectively if unwittingly hand an institutional footing to the animal rights agenda. We are giving leverage and power to that single-issue ideology, which can be uncompromising and extreme, without thinking through the consequences. …
Lord Mancroft (Conservative): … this Bill introduces the concept of sentience into English law for the first time, despite the fact that it has been the basis for 150 years of very sound animal welfare legislation, so you might wonder why we need to put it on the statute book today. I suggest we probably do not. It also sets up a new animal welfare committee—the animal sentience committee—despite the fact that we have three very good committees looking at animal welfare at the moment, each of which could have fulfilled the tasks set for this committee …

Lord Etherton (Crossbench): … Even at this late stage, it is worth emphasising that the absence of any restriction on the purview of the sentience committee will mean that no recreational activity, cultural tradition, regional heritage or religious rite—in its practice or observance—is safe from scrutiny by the committee. In Committee, the Minister was good enough to give some reassurances about the long-standing practices of religious slaughter in this country going back hundreds of years. The trouble is that the only policy that has been disclosed means that it will be open to any future Secretary of State, Minister or future Government to take a different view. Unlike under the Lisbon treaty, there is absolutely nothing to restrain them from doing so. … if the Government decided not to follow a recommendation from the sentience committee on contentious issues relating to animal welfare, it would inevitably give rise to the potential for judicial review and challenge. … The Government may be confident that they would win, but these will not be straightforward matters. …

Lord Benyon: … this concept of animal sentience was on the statute book; we had it under Article 13 of the Lisbon treaty. The debate, which will continue in another place, is about the degree to which we transpose that. … I make an absolute assurance to the noble Baroness, Lady Deech, who is not here. The noble and learned Lord, Lord Etherton, made a very good point, and I respect him and his knowledge. …

Finally, on religious rites, I made a promise on Report and continue to make that point. The noble Baroness, Lady Deech, the noble Lord, Lord Sheikh, and others made genuine points about concerns in the communities they come from or sought to represent in their words on this Bill. I and the Government take these concerns really seriously and want to give them every assurance that the Government’s policy remains to support them on these matters of religious importance and on how they wish to have animals slaughtered. We will make officials and Ministers available to give those added reassurances. …

To read the full transcript see
https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-12-13/debates/E2CAE469-DF73-4F0D-BE7D-7E1229E3B07D/AnimalWelfare(Sentience)Bill(HL)

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 Memorial Day 2022**

**Stephen Dunne (DUP):** To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on plans to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2022.

**The Deputy First Minister (Michelle O'Neill):** Holocaust Memorial Day is a poignant commemoration. It is a time to remember the millions of people who were persecuted during the atrocities of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, and, importantly, it is a reminder to all of us of the need to end discrimination and bigotry in all its forms. The Executive Office leads on Holocaust Memorial Day on behalf of the Executive. A commemoration event will be held at Belfast City Hall on 26 January 2022. That event will be delivered by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, with support from the Executive Office and district council colleagues. Due to the pandemic, in-person attendance will have to be limited, but the event will be streamed live to ensure that it is accessible to as many people as possible. Executive Office Ministers will participate in the event, and the First Minister and I will also contribute to the commemoration event that is taking place in London on 27 January 2022.

**Stephen Dunne:** ... It is important that lessons continue to be learned from the Holocaust, including among our young people. Unfortunately, antisemitism continues to be a reality here, and we saw a number of instances, earlier this year, of Jewish graves being attacked. What more can her office do to ensure that we do not see a repeat of such attacks? Will she commit to assisting the Jewish community, which cannot get kosher meat into Northern Ireland due to the protocol?

**Michelle O’Neill:** We have to support all traditions and cultures. The Member referred to the Jewish community and the issue with kosher meat, which is, of course, something that we want to ensure that we get a resolution to. That is why conversations and dialogue are important and why I absolutely encourage there to be a positive outcome to the talks between the British Government and the EU. Of course, we would not be having those conversations if we did not have Brexit, which was championed by the Member’s own party. We are where we are, however. I hope for certainty, progress and stability. That is what our people want, and it is certainly what our business community wants. I spent the past days speaking to business leaders, and the clear message from all of them was this: provide us with certainty and stability. They want an agreed way forward. They certainly do not want the triggering of article 16. On tackling antisemitism, we always have to ask ourselves: are we doing enough? Is there more that we can do? What can we do to challenge biased attitudes in society? We have many programmes for good relations and for reaching out in other areas. I will continue to speak to officials to make sure that we are doing everything that we can. Certainly, if the Member has any ideas on that front, I will be more than happy to listen to and engage with them.

**House of Commons Written Answer**

**Equipment: Israel**

**Neil Coyle (Labour) [87688]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that British manufacturers are prohibited from selling equipment to Israeli distributors to be used to demolish homes in the occupied Palestinian territories.

**Ranil Jayawardena:** For items that are subject to an export licence, HM Government takes its strategic export responsibilities seriously and will assess all export licences in accordance with the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria. We will not grant a licence authorising the supply of controlled items anywhere in the world, if to do so would be inconsistent with the Criteria. We continue to monitor the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories closely, and we will take action to suspend, refuse or revoke licences – in line with the Criteria – if circumstances require.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-06/87688

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**House of Lords Written Answers**

**Gaza: Medical Equipment**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL4480]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that medical equipment intended for the care of cancer patients in Gaza is being held in Egypt; and what steps they are taking to secure the release to Gaza of any such medical equipment.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK continues to monitor the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza. We 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 continue to urge the Egyptian authorities to show maximum flexibility in maintaining access through the Rafah crossing. The critically ill in Gaza should be able to access the urgent medical care they need.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-29/hl4480

**Occupied Territories: Demolition**

**Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL4581]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the data published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs showing that in the first nine months of 2021 compared to the equivalent period in 2020 (1) 21 per cent more structures were demolished or seized by the Israeli authorities, and (2) 28 per cent more people were displaced, in the West Bank; and what assessment they have made of the EU's call for Israel to halt the demolition of Palestinian homes in occupied territory.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The UK regularly raises the issue of demolitions, confiscations and forced evictions of Palestinians from their homes with the Government of Israel, most recently with Israel's Ministry of Defense on 19 October. We regularly call on Israel to halt such counterproductive activity and instead urgently commit to creating a better environment for a just and lasting peace.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-30/hl4581
The data referred to above can be read at
https://www.ochaopt.org/data/demolition

Israel: Palestinians

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL4482] To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last had discussions with the government of Israel regarding (1) violence by settlers in the West Bank, and (2) the action of Israel's military forces in (a) protecting civilians, and (b) removing illegal settlement outposts; and what were the results of such discussions.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK regularly raises the issue of settler violence with the Government of Israel, most recently with Israel's Ministry of Defence on 19 October. We condemn any incidence of violence in the settlements. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised UK opposition to settlement expansion with the Government of Israel on 9 November.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-29/hl4482

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL4557] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make to the government of Israel regarding the (1) arrest, and (2) beating, of two Palestinians who had complained of settler violence against them, as reported by the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories on 25 November.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. The UK regularly raises the issue of settler violence with the Government of Israel. We welcome the 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 also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-11-30/hl4557

The report referred to above can be read at
https://www.btselem.org/hebron/20211125_soldiers_attack_palestinians_complaining_of_settler_violence_and_arrest_one_for_allegedly_assaulting_them

Other Relevant Information

Supreme Court

Judicial decision-making: case studies from Biblical times and now
Speech by the Rt Hon Lady Rose of Colmworth DBE to the UK Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, Chancery Bar Association, Combar and Tecbar

Community Security Trust (CST)

We are Generation Terror!
A new report published today by CST and the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation & Political Violence (ICSR) looks at the growing phenomenon of far-right
youth networks spreading anti-Jewish hate and inciting terrorism across Europe. …

In recent years, there has been a concerning increase in young people’s involvement in extreme right movements, with the number of child terror suspects arrested in the UK having tripled in the last year. This increase in arrests has been coupled by increasing concerns over the grooming of young people into extremism by older individuals. This report takes a different approach, focusing on the agency young people possess by analysing the ideology, online activities, offline activities and threat posed by 10 racial nationalist youth groups across Western Europe. By doing so it demonstrates that young people are not only vulnerable to online grooming, but also increasingly themselves the groomers, the propagandists, the recruiters, the plotters and the convicted perpetrators. All groups in the sample are composed of and run by young individuals, with an average membership age of under 25. These groups’ ideologies mirror those of racial nationalists more widely, with common themes such as a belief in the Great Replacement conspiracy theory, Islamophobia, xenophobia and homophobia. Antisemitism plays a key role in a lot of these groups' ideologies, with the vast majority of groups spreading antisemitic conspiracy theories including Holocaust denial, and portraying Jews as the root of all problems. A number of groups have also actively and explicitly incited violence against the Jewish community, claiming to aim to bring about a “clean world”, “rid of the plagues of the Jew”. …

https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2021/12/14/we-are-generation-terror

“We are Generation Terror!”: Youth-on-youth Radicalisation in Extreme-right Youth Groups
https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/2/4/We%20are%20Generation%20Terror.pdf

** Relevant Legislation **

** UK Parliament **

** Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867

Third Reading, House of Lords
https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-12-13/debates/E2CAE469-DF73-4F0D-BE7D-7E1229E3B07D/AnimalWelfare(Sentience)Bill(HL)

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

** Online Safety Bill (Draft)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill
Report of the Joint Committee on the 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

** closes in 8 days
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)

** Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights (closing date 8 March 2022)

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