



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Judaism: Festivals and Special Occasions

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [109283] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he will take to ensure that local authorities seek to celebrate and commemorate the history, recent and historical, of Judaism within their areas.

Community Development

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [109284] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he will take to assist local Jewish communities engage with their local history, including former synagogues and other significant sites.

Eddie Hughes: I would encourage all local authorities to celebrate and commemorate Judaism and to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the Jewish community in their area.

The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) recently launched a new resource to enrich teaching and learning about the Holocaust. The new website, www.ukholocaustmap.org.uk will help communities across the country learn about their local connections to the Holocaust, Jewish refugees and British responses to Nazism.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-21/109283>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-21/109284>

Religion: Education

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [110554] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps has his Department taken to support the teaching of religious education in schools.

Robin Walker: The government firmly believes in the importance of good quality religious education (RE) as it is essential in developing children's knowledge of

British values and traditions, and those of other countries. It is a compulsory subject for all state-funded schools, including academies, for all pupils up to the age of 18. The department supports the teaching of RE in several ways, including through central funding, curriculum support and teacher training.

Each local authority is required by law to establish a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), and department funding is provided via the central schools services block of the national funding formula. We do not specify what proportion of funding is allocated to specific services, but it is expected that some is allocated by local authorities to their SACRE-related activity. The responsibilities of each SACRE include:

- advising the local authority on all aspects of its provision for RE in its schools
- advising on matters relating to training for teachers in RE and collective worship
- developing ways of supporting schools in the delivery of locally agreed RE syllabuses and monitoring its delivery

In relation to the curriculum, Oak National Academy, funded by the department, provides lesson plans, teaching materials and curriculum maps for RE for key stages 1 to 4. Further information is available here:

www.thenational.academy

In relation to teacher training, subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) courses may be appropriate in cases where a Schools Direct lead school or an initial teacher training provider identifies applicants who have the potential to become outstanding teachers but who need to increase their subject knowledge in a range of subjects, including an 8 week religious education course. Further information is available here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/subject-knowledge-enhancement-an-introduction

The 8 week SKE can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis, and it must be completed before qualified teacher status can be recommended and awarded.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/110554>

House of Lords Written Answer

Social Media: Harassment and Racial Discrimination

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL5565] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to provide (1) support, and (2) advice, for those who experience (a) racial discrimination, (b) harassment, and (c) racial hatred, on social media platforms.

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Under the Online Safety Bill, services in scope will need to have effective systems in place to minimise and remove illegal content and protect children from harmful abuse. Major platforms will also need to address content which is legal but harmful for adults. Priority categories of legal but harmful content will be set out in legislation, and are likely to include racist abuse and some types of harassment.

If platforms fail in their duties under the Bill, they will face tough enforcement action including fines of up to 10% of global annual qualifying turnover.

The draft Bill has been subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee which reported its recommendations on 14 December. We are considering the Committee's report and will introduce the Bill as soon as possible.

The Government has also published an Online Media Literacy Strategy which supports the empowerment of users with skills and knowledge they need to make safe and informed choices online. This has an amplified focus on supporting users who are most vulnerable online, such as those who experience disproportionate amounts of online abuse.

Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Coronavirus: Israel

Robert Halfon (Conservative) [111550] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions (a) he and (b) Ministers have had with their Israeli counterparts on tackling covid-19.

Gillian Keegan: We have had no recent discussions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-25/111550>

House of Lords Written Answers

Birzeit University

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL5444] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning the storming of Birzeit University by Israeli forces on 10 January and the arrests of members of the student union.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law. We also continue to urge the Israeli Government to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of educational institutions, including reiterating the importance of freedom of speech.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-17/hl5444>

Unmanned Air Vehicles

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL5445] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of weaponised unmanned aerial vehicles; and what discussions they have had with the government of Israel about the use of such weapons in the Occupied Territories.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have an ongoing dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-17/hl5445>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL5453] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning reports of the destruction of Palestinian agricultural land for military training purposes.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of reports of destruction of agricultural land and the UK raises this issue with Israeli counterparts when appropriate. 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/2022-01-17/hl5443>

Israel: Bedouin

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL5454] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel concerning reports of clashes in the Negev desert between Israeli police and Bedouin over afforestation activities.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are closely following the debate around the issue of unresolved Bedouin land claims, unrecognised Bedouin villages in the Negev and lack of basic services. We continue to encourage the Israeli authorities and Bedouin communities to engage in dialogue to agree a satisfactory solution to the issue, respecting the rights of the people affected.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-17/hl5454>

Omar Abdalmajeed As'ad

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL5455] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning the death of 80-year-old Omar Abd al-Majid As'ad in Jiljilya on 12 January.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have urged the Israeli authorities to carry out a swift and thorough investigation. We have called 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 Palestinian detainees. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to detention practices.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-17/hl5455>

Amal Nakhleh

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL5456] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning the administrative detention of Amal Nakhleh since November 2020.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of Amal Nakhleh's case. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-17/hl5456>

Amnesty International

Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime Against Humanity

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/MDE1551412022ENGLISH.pdf>

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>

Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

Northern Ireland Assembly

Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

[TOP](#)

Consultations

** new or updated today

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

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

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/human-rights-act-reform-a-modern-bill-of-rights>

**** Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland** (closing date 28 March 2022)

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-hate-crime-legislation-northern-ireland>

CPS: Public interest guidance for suicide pact and ‘mercy killing’ type cases

(closing date 9 April 2022)

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/consultation/consultation-public-interest-guidance-suicide-pact-and-mercy-killing-type-cases-0>

TOP

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