



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 Oral Answer

Topical Questions: Ministry of Defence

Michael Fabricant (Conservative): Last year, the Royal Air Force took part in Exercise Blue Flag in Israel. What lessons did the Royal Air Force learn from working with the Israeli air force?

Ben Wallace: I cannot say right now, but I can say that it is about readiness: we must be ready because we never know where the threat comes from.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk//commons/2022-02-21/debates/7499B4FE-C10A-4DD9-B39E-788AC11935F3/TopicalQuestions#contribution-9534F649-F0FD-444E-BBA1-5E8FABF9BF18>

House of Commons Written Answers

Antisemitism

Catherine West (Labour) [122768] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to tackle the rise in anti-semitic crimes and incidents.

Kemi Badenoch: The number of antisemitic incidents and the rise in the last year is unacceptable. The Government takes hate crime very seriously and are clear that victims should be supported and the individuals who carry out these heinous attacks must be brought to justice.

We are providing £14 million this year, and have provided £65 million to date, for the Protective Security Grant to protect Jewish schools and community buildings. Alongside this, the Government's Independent Advisor on Antisemitism, Lord Mann, continues to provide advice on the most effective methods to tackle antisemitism. We were also the first country to adopt the IHRA definition of Antisemitism and continue to encourage organisations and councils to adopt the definition – demonstrating their willingness to support the Jewish community.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-10/122768>

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

Political Impartiality in Schools

The Secretary of State for Education (Nadhim Zahawi) [HCWS613] Last week, the Department for Education published non-statutory guidance on schools' legal duties on political impartiality, as set out in sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996, part 2 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and many academies' funding agreements.

These requirements have applied to schools for many years, and most schools are experienced in meeting them. However, the Government are aware that a number of recent issues have raised concerns and have made some teachers less confident to apply them in practice. Therefore, we have developed this guidance, working with the sector to ensure it is comprehensive and helpful.

Teaching about complicated and sensitive political issues can be challenging, but it is important that teachers can cover the full range of political issues they need to with confidence. The guidance is clear that it is not seeking to limit the range of political issues and viewpoints schools can and do teach about.

It is important that children are supported in their education to understand a range of perspectives and form their own views, without being unduly influenced by the personal views of those teaching.

This is what helps children and young people go on to become active citizens who can engage in our democratic society and who have an understanding and respect for legitimate differences of opinion.

This guidance will offer assurance to most schools that their legal duties in this area are being met without issue and help them continue their good work. For other schools the guidance should help them put in place the necessary processes to ensure adherence going forward.

Importantly, this guidance should also help all parties—including parents, carers, and others—to understand how schools should go about meeting their legal duties, allowing issues around impartiality to be taken seriously and resolved calmly through dialogue.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-21/debates/22022170000012/PoliticalImpartialityInSchools>

The guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools/political-impartiality-in-schools>

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Cabinet Office

Updated guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-wedding-and-civil-partnership-ceremonies-receptions-and-celebrations>

Department for Education

Out-of-school settings: Updated COVID-19 guidance for parents and carers

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1056221/Out-of-school_settings_-_COVID-19_guidance_for_parents_and_carers.pdf

Israel

See also House of Commons oral answer “Topical Questions: Ministry of Defence” in the Home Affairs section above.

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL6029] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister for Middle East and North Africa on 3 February (HC114612) which refers to the need for “strong and thriving Palestinian education” and for the government of Israel to “abide by its obligations under international law”, what steps they will take to ensure that (1) Israel complies with those requirements, and (2) Palestinian children are secured their right to education.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains firmly committed to ensuring access to education for all Palestinians. The UK Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of access to education with the Israeli authorities. 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.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-07/hl6029>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-31/114612>

Palestinians: Recognition of States

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL6030] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to recognise Palestine as an independent state.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to work closely with international partners to strongly advocate for a two-state solution and encourage a return to meaningful negotiations between both parties.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-07/hl6030>

Israeli Settlements

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL6031] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli settler structures have been built near Khirbet Humsa Al Fouqa on privately-owned Palestinian land; that the owners of the land were forcibly evicted from their homes; and that an illegal settlement will be constructed on this land.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law. Minister Cleverly raised UK opposition to settlement expansion with the Government of Israel on 9 November. The UK is also clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. On 19 January, Minister Cleverly urged the Government of Israel to stop these practices. The UK 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 Defence on 20

January and Ministry of Justice on 27 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-07/hl6031>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/jamescleverly/status/1483866915613388810>

Hebron: Shops

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL6049] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make to the government of Israel concerning the closure of Palestinian shops in the Israeli controlled area of Hebron, reportedly, as a form of collective punishment.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK will continue to raise the issue of freedom of movement, trade and access into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the Israeli authorities. We recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures and we encourage them to deploy these in a way that minimises tension and uses appropriate force.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-07/hl6049>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL6050] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Amnesty International Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians, published on 1 February; and what discussions they have had with the government of Israel about the findings in the report.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We do not agree with the use of this terminology. Any judgment on whether serious crimes under international law have occurred is a matter for judicial decision, rather than for governments or non-judicial bodies. As a friend of Israel, we have a regular dialogue on human rights.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-07/hl6050>

The report referred to above can be read at

<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

**** closes in 3 days**

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Draft Corporate Plan 2022-2025

(closing date 25 February 2022)

<https://www.equalityni.org/CorporatePlanConsultation#gsc.tab=0>

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>

Trade with Israel (closing date 30 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/trade-with-israel-call-for-input>

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](#)