



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Energy Bills Rebate: Religious Buildings

Catherine West (Labour) [58987] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Government has made of the adequacy of funding for (a) faith centres and (b) places of worship under the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

Graham Stuart: The Energy Bill Relief Scheme will provide a price reduction to all UK businesses and other non-domestic energy users including faith centres and places of worship on eligible energy supply contracts. This will help ensure they are protected from excessively high energy bills over the winter period.

The exact value of the savings for each non-domestic customer will vary depending on their contract type, the tariff and the volume used, but the scheme is intended to ensure broad parity and fairness.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/58987>

Charities: Energy Price Guarantee

Jonathan Ashworth (Labour) [62840] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will provide specific advice to small charities on the effect of the energy price guarantee on those organisations.

Graham Stuart: The Government understands the pressure charities and other voluntary organisations are facing with their energy bills, which is why immediate action has been taken to support them over the winter. The details of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme were announced on 21 September 2022, initially running for 6 months covering energy use from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. Non-domestic customers, including charities do not need to take action or apply to the scheme as support will automatically be applied to eligible customer bills. Suppliers will inform eligible customers about the amount of discount being applied as appropriate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-13/62840>

Information about the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bill-relief-scheme-help-for-businesses-and-other-non-domestic-customers>

Church Schools

Fleur Anderson (Labour) [45005] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the Education Bill on church schools.

Jonathan Gullis: The Government has engaged regularly with the Church of England, the Catholic Church, and other faith groups regarding the Schools Bill. The Bill includes academy specific legislation to ensure that academies with a religious character have, as far as possible, equivalent statutory protections as those that currently apply to maintained schools.

The published Schools Bill: impact assessment can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-bill-impact-assessment>

This provides an assessment of the policy and equalities impacts of the measures in the Bill.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-02/45005>

Religious Hatred: Hinduism

Feryal Clark (Labour) [60157] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to tackle Hinduphobia.

Paul Scully: We are committed to protecting the right of individuals to freely practise their religion and we will not tolerate anti-Hindu hatred in any form. The Government's Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme has provided physical security protection measures to places of worship across England and Wales that are particularly vulnerable to religiously motivated hate crime, including 26 Hindu temples.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/60157>

Information about the Funding Scheme referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

Senedd Oral Answer

Faith-based Heritage Projects

Darren Millar (Conservative) [OQ58575] What action is the Welsh Government taking to promote faith-based heritage projects in North Wales?

Vaughan Gething: Our religious heritage has an important place at the heart of our communities. The Welsh Government provides funding and support to faith-based heritage projects in various ways. We actively support both buildings and organisations in this sector to conserve and promote this aspect of our shared history.

Darren Millar: Thank you for that response, Minister, and I am grateful for the support that the Welsh Government has given to a number of projects across north Wales and indeed in other parts of the country. One project that is currently under way in north Wales is being organised by Nathan Abrams and his team from Bangor University, who've been researching the history of Jewish communities in north Wales. They've already undertaken research into the Jewish history of Anglesey, Gwynedd and the Llandudno areas, and they're now moving into north-east Wales to continue with their research. This is, obviously, very important, not just to the Jewish community, but to other people in north Wales who care deeply and passionately about our faith narrative as a country. What support is the Welsh Government giving to such research projects? And if little investment is going into the research of this sort of history, can I encourage the Welsh Government to take a good look at how it might be able to facilitate these sorts of things in the future?

Vaughan Gething: Well, I'll certainly look at the issue together with the Deputy Minister, who normally leads in this area. Of course, she is well aware of Jewish

heritage, given the work that has been done in her own constituency. And I'm particularly interested in not just Jewish heritage within the city of Cardiff, which I represent a good chunk of, but also the reality that it still plays an important role in the lives of many people, not just at festival time. So, I recognise that the history of faith communities is part of social history and what it means for the future. So, I'm more than happy to commit to having a discussion with the Deputy Minister to understand more about both the project and what the Welsh Government can do to be broadly supportive.

<https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/13012#C454527>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Israel: Armed Forces

Kenny MacAskill (Alba) [60097] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Israeli armed forces personnel are on deployment in the UK.

James Heapey: There are currently five Israeli personnel on duty in the UK, although these are for liaison and training purposes rather than a military deployment.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/60097>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [468] **Location of the British Embassy in Israel** – That this House urges the Foreign Office to cease its review regarding the location of the British Embassy in Israel and commit to keeping the embassy in Tel Aviv; maintains that moving the British Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem without a negotiated peace settlement will inflame already heightened tensions in the region and will make peace harder to achieve; expresses its concern that the very act of a review is itself hugely inflammatory; notes that such a move would be a breach of international law; recalls how the decision by the United States to move their Embassy, under former President Trump, resulted in violent clashes which resulted in the deaths of around sixty people; and affirms its support for a two-state solution, in which Israel and Palestine both exist with secure boundaries based on the 1967 lines with two capitals in Jerusalem recognised in international law.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60181>

Department for International Trade

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1111241/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2022-10-19.pdf

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1111320/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2022-10-19.pdf

Israel's Practices against Palestinian Economy Exacerbating Dire Living Conditions in Occupied Territory, Syrian Golan, Senior Official Tells Second Committee

... **Tarik Alami, Director of the Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**, introduced the note by the Secretary-General on "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan" (document A/77/90–E/2022/66). He noted that during the reporting period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, Israel escalated its excessive use of force against the Palestinians, including illegal unwarranted force, amounting to arbitrary deprivation of life coupled with lack of accountability.

In particular, he outlined that April to May 2021 saw an eruption of tensions across the occupied Palestinian territory and military escalation against Gaza that resulted in extensive civilian deaths and injuries as well as the destruction of infrastructure. In the West Bank, he continued, the Israeli security and military failed to protect Palestinians from the highest level of settler violence since 2017. He added that Israel also continued punitive home demolitions of families and neighbours of Palestinians suspected of carrying out attacks, which amounts to collective punishment prohibited by international humanitarian law. He further highlighted that Israel has denied Palestinian access to their natural resources, including shared water resources and an estimated 1.5 billion barrels of oil reserves in the West Bank as well as more than \$2.5 billion worth of natural gas off the Gaza coast.

"Israel's system of policies and practices has systematically stripped the Palestinian economy of vital elements for its healthy operation, whose productive base continues to shrink, thereby exacerbating dire living conditions", he emphasized. ...

Sahar J.O. Abushawesh, observer for the State of Palestine ... said the report illustrates the repressive, destructive and colonial practices and apartheid policies perpetrated by Israel against her people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in deliberate violation of international law. The illegal occupation continues to displace and dispossess people from their homes and confiscate land and resources, obstructing independence and development, for over 55 years of socioeconomic, humanitarian and human devastation. She noted that over 2 million Palestinians living in Gaza continue to suffer the wrath on an inhumane illegal blockade, deepening poverty, hunger and unemployment, an unimaginable toll. Israel continues to allow "terrorist settlers" to kill her people in plain sight, destroying their homes and productive infrastructure, attacking agricultural land, fruit and olive trees — cornerstones of the Palestinian economy for centuries. She further cited Israel's exploitation of 90 per cent of transboundary water resources, allocating less than 10 per cent for Palestinian use. As a result, a Palestinian receives on average less than 73 litres of water per day, compared to 300 litres for an Israeli ...

Muhammad Imran Khan (Pakistan) ... said Israel must cease its confiscation of Palestinian property, construction and expansion of Israeli settlements and the wall, demolition of Palestinian homes, forced displaced of Palestinian civilians and all measures of annexation ...

In Gaza, Israel's blockade and repeated military aggression have made development goals even more elusive, he said, urging Israel, the occupying Power, to cease the exploitation damage, cause of loss or depletion and endangerment of natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem and occupied Syrian Golan. ...

Humam Luai Abdulmuhsen Al-Shaikhli (Iraq) ... stated that "the list of Israeli violations of international law is very long and cannot be counted" ...

Highlighting that education is key to achieving sustainable development, he pointed out

that Israel's policies and practices continue to make access to education a major challenge in Area C, where more than a third of residential communities lack primary schools. ...

Wissam Al Nahhas (Syria) ... [said] Israel's building and expansion of building settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan are threatening the safety of Syrians living there. The occupying Power is imposing its tax laws on Syrian farmers, while preventing those with work injuries to access health benefits under the compensation law ... Moreover, Israel has buried 1,500 barrels of radioactive nuclear waste in 20 locations in the occupied Syrian Golan, putting the lives of Syrian citizens at risk of cancer ...

Evgeny Y. Varganov (Russian Federation) stated that his country has always supported the two-State solution based on the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, according to the pre-1967 border lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital. ... He affirmed that the Syrian Golan is an integral part of Syria, criticizing actions carried out by Israel in the territories including the destruction of property and arable land, and disproportionate and arbitrary use of force. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2022/gaef3574.doc.htm>

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/77/90–E/2022/66)

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/375/03/PDF/N2237503.pdf>

General Assembly: First Committee (Disarmament and International Security)

Ahmad Salmeen (Kuwait) ... emphasized the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and its placement of all its nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime, particularly since it was the only party in the region that had not acceded to the Treaty, and prevented the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone there. ...

Michal Gerstler (Israel) said her country supported the nuclear non-proliferation regime was a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and contributed to the CTBT's verification regime. ... The NPT did not provide a remedy for the unique security situation in the Middle East, let alone the repeated violations of the Treaty by some of its Member States. Four of the five cases of serious NPT violations took place in the Middle East. Iran had been developing its illicit nuclear programme for decades. ... Syria's undeclared nuclear activities were also worrisome. The clandestine nuclear reactor's construction was a blatant violation of the International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards Agreement. If completed, the reactor would have been suited to producing plutonium for nuclear weapons. Some regional actors claimed that security architectures in the Middle East could be established without Israel or even without recognizing Israel's right to exist, but that position was untenable. ...

Qais Z. F. Kasabri, observer for the State of Palestine ... welcomed the convening of the first session of the conference to establish a zone free from nuclear and all other mass-destruction weapons in the Middle East in November 2019 ... he noted that one party — Israel — had decided to boycott it, given its desire to continue to possess nuclear weapons illegally, considering that it was above the law and that everyone must abide by the rules while it enjoyed all the exceptions that threatened the security and safety of the region. ...

The representative of Iran said ... Iran had responded to all IAEA questions in a thorough and comprehensive manner, while Israel had done everything to scuttle the Plan of Action.

The representative of Syria, responding to Israel's delegate, rejected the accusations and lies designed to mask that State's crimes and to escape from resolutions passed against it. While Israel possessed biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, Syria cooperated with IAEA, showing the greatest flexibility and full adherence to the global safeguards agreement. Citing Israel's aggression of 2007 against his country, he called

on that State to cooperate with IAEA on pollution generated by its missiles. ...

Mohammad Kurniadi Koba (Indonesia) ... reiterated his condemnation of Israeli military aggression against the Gaza Strip in 2009, and July 2014 and August 2014, and the occupying Power's indiscriminate shelling and bombing of Palestinian civilian areas. He was gravely concerned about the reported use in civilian areas of harmful and potentially fatal incendiary weapons, such as white phosphorus, and he reiterated the call for a thorough investigation. ...

Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) ... affirmed that Israel's accession to the NPT would contribute to achieving its universality and boost regional and international security. It would also enhance the credibility of the international disarmament and non-proliferation system, as Israel was the only country in the region that did not belong to any of the three arms-related treaties. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2022/qadis3692.doc.htm>

Secretary-General Welcomes Settling of Maritime Boundary Dispute between Lebanon, Israel, Says Encouraging Development Can Promote Region's Stability

... The Secretary-General welcomes the announcements that the Governments of Lebanon and Israel have formally agreed to settle their maritime boundary dispute, as mediated by the United States. He strongly believes this encouraging development can promote increased stability in the region and enhanced prosperity for the Lebanese and Israeli peoples.

The United Nations remains committed to assisting the parties, as requested.

The Secretary-General reiterates the commitment of the United Nations to support the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant resolutions which remain essential to the stability of the region.

<https://press.un.org/en/2022/sgsm21530.doc.htm>

The Resolution referred to above can be read at

<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1701>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

**** Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/47164/documents/2326>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

Online Safety Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

**** Schools Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

House of Lords Library Briefing: Schools Bill: Regulation of academies and trusts

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/schools-bill-regulation-of-academies-and-trusts/>

Scottish Parliament

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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