



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Written Answer

Anti-social Behaviour

Lord Strathcarron (Conservative) [HL2853] To ask His Majesty's Government what progress they have made to ensure that the recording of non-crime hate incidents is governed by a Code of Practice that is subject to parliamentary approval.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I fully recognise the concern that surrounds the recording of non-crime hate incidents. Home Office officials are currently working with the College of Policing to ensure that the right to freedom of expression is better protected.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-24/hl2853>

Ofcom

Ofcom concludes investigation into the BBC's coverage of antisemitic attack

Ofcom received a number of complaints about an online BBC news article and news report broadcast on BBC One London about an antisemitic attack on Jewish students in London. These were published and broadcast on 2 December 2021. ...

We have found that the BBC One London News report was not in breach of the Broadcasting Code, but, in our view, the BBC made a serious editorial misjudgment following the broadcast.

Our investigation uncovered significant editorial failings in the BBC's reporting of an antisemitic attack on Jewish students travelling on board a bus in London.

The BBC's reports claimed that an audio recording made during the incident included anti-Muslim slurs – which it later changed to the singular “slur” – which came from inside the bus. Shortly afterwards, it received evidence which disputed this interpretation of the audio.

The BBC failed to promptly acknowledge that the audio was disputed and did not update

its online news article to reflect this for almost eight weeks. During this time the BBC was aware that the article's content was causing significant distress and anxiety to the victims of the attack and the wider Jewish community.

This, in our opinion, was a significant failure to observe its editorial guidelines to report news with due accuracy and due impartiality.

We also carefully considered a related news report broadcast on BBC London News. ... we concluded that at the time it was broadcast and for the 24 hour period it was available on the BBC iPlayer, the programme did not breach our rules.

That said, the BBC made a serious editorial misjudgment by not reporting on air, at any point, that the claim it had made about anti-Muslim slurs was disputed, once new evidence emerged.

This failure to respond promptly and transparently created an impression of defensiveness by the BBC among the Jewish community. It demonstrates that the BBC has further to go in learning how to respond when its reporting is in contention. We will review how the BBC has addressed the complaints handling and transparency issues raised by this case.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2022/ofcom-concludes-investigation-into-the-bbcs-coverage-of-antisemitic-attack>

Ofcom Opinion: BBC News Online and BBC London News 2 December 2021 (published online) and 2 December 2021, 18:30 (broadcast)

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0023/247163/BBC-News-Online-and-BBC-London-News-2-December-2021.pdf

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Holocaust

European Parliament

President Metsola receives the King David Award

Today in Auschwitz, Poland, the President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola was presented with the King David Award from the European Jewish Association (EJA). President Metsola received the award in recognition of her support to the Jewish community in Europe. ...

"The award will serve to me as a continuous reminder of those heinous crimes committed against humanity in the past and to recall the importance of speaking up in defence of our common values today", said President Metsola in her acceptance speech.

She underlined, that the responsibility we carry must start within our own homes: "Anti-semitism is still rife in our societies. Holocaust deniers, conspiracy myths, disinformation and violence of every kind that targets and singles out members of our communities have no place in our Europe."

Furthermore, she recalled the words of former President of the European Parliament Simone Veil: "The holocaust is the heritage of us all". With this in mind, President Metsola reiterated her intention on having a permanent Holocaust memorial in the European Parliament. ...

Full acceptance speech of President Metsola can be found [here](#).

To read the full press release see

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20221107IPR49303/president-metsola-receives-the-king-david-award>

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House of Commons Written Answers

Trade Agreements

Sarah Olney (Liberal Democrat) [74828] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of UK international trade is covered by free trade agreements.

Greg Hands: We have an ambitious programme of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations to help our nation become a truly Global Britain. The UK Government has already secured trade agreements with 71 countries plus the EU, partners that accounted for 63.1% (£814bn) of UK bilateral trade in 2021. Our FTA programme continues at pace, with trade negotiations currently live with eight markets – India, the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Canada, Mexico, Israel and Greenland, as well as negotiating a Digital Trade Agreement with Ukraine.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-31/74828>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Service Industries: Exports

Angus Brendan MacNeil (SNP) [71011] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to enable the UK's financial and professional services industries gain full access to international markets through international trade agreements being negotiated by her Department.

Angus Brendan MacNeil (SNP) [71012] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether it is her policy for the UK's professional and financial services industries to gain full market access in trade deals with (a) India, (b) Israel and (c) Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership.

Nigel Huddleston: The UK is the second-largest exporter of other business services, which includes professional, and financial services, in the world. To improve the access these important and diverse sectors have to foreign markets HMG seeks ambitious commitments in its free trade agreements to support all elements of the services ecosystem. This includes provisions on market access, regulatory transparency, investment, business travel, recognition of qualifications, regulatory dialogue and data.

HMG has published its objectives for negotiations with [India](#), [Israel](#) and [CPTPP](#), which can be found on gov.uk.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-25/71011>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-25/71012>

Iran: Sanctions

Mark Pritchard (Conservative) [72967] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will introduce new sanctions on Iran to prevent the import of spares and parts used in the manufacture of drones used for attacks against (a) Ukraine, (b) Israel and (c) international shipping.

David Rutley: Iran's support for the Russian military campaign in Ukraine is deplorable, and the supply of drones is in violation of UN Security Council resolution 2231. Iran is profiting from Russia's attacks on Ukrainian citizens, causing human suffering and the destruction of critical infrastructure. On 20 October, the UK introduced a sanctions package that targets Iranian individuals and business responsible for supplying Russia with drones. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations, as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations. A full list is available on the UK Sanctions List.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-sanctions-on-iran-relating-to-human-rights>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-27/72967>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Jerusalem: Embassies

Rupa Huq (Independent) [59287] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities on a potential move of the UK's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Israel: Embassies

Julian Sturdy (Conservative) [59707] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department will include religious representatives in the review of moving the British Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

Julian Sturdy (Conservative) [59708] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has held recent discussions with his counterparts on the possibility of relocating the British Embassy in Israel from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Written Questions

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [77328] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to answer named day Question 65661 on Israel: Embassies, tabled by the hon. Member for Hammersmith on 18 October 2022.

David Rutley: There are no plans to move the UK embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv. Israel is a close friend and key strategic partner, built on decades of cooperation. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with Israel through our Embassy in Tel Aviv.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/59287>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/59707>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/59708>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-02/77328>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-18/65661>

Israel: Palestinians

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [72947] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the number of (a) night-time and (b) daytime Israeli military raids there have been on Palestinian homes in the West Bank in 2022.

David Rutley: While we recognise Israel's legitimate need to deploy security measures, we encourage them to deploy these in a way that minimises tension. We call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and we have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. We stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-27/72947>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Haitham Hani Mohammad Mubarak and Odai Trad Hisham Salah

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [72948] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on holding independent investigations into the use of live ammunition and killing of (a) Haitham Hani Mohammad Mubarak on 8 September and (b) Odai Trad Hisham Salah on 15 September 2022.

Rayan Suleiman

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [72949] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on holding an independent investigation into the death during a military activity carried out by Israeli forces of Rayyan Suleiman in Bethlehem on 29 September 2022.

David Rutley: We regularly raise the issue of the numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities. We encourage them to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations and, if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. We stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, particularly the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-27/72948>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-27/72949>

House of Lords Written Answer

Israel: Embassies

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL2452] To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 28 September (HL2252), what plans they have to review the location of the British Embassy in Israel; and what steps they are taking as part of any such review to consult relevant civil society organisations, non-government organisations and faith communities.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: There are no plans to move the UK embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv. Israel is a close friend and key strategic partner, built on decades of cooperation. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with Israel through our Embassy in Tel Aviv.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-10/hl2452>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-09-06/hl2252>

Downing Street

PM meeting with President Isaac Herzog of Israel: 7 November 2022

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak met President Isaac Herzog of Israel today at COP27 in Egypt. They reaffirmed their commitment to delivering on the legacy of Glasgow, taking action to drive down emissions and protect nature.

The leaders also discussed regional security and welcomed continued defence and security cooperation between the UK and Israel.

The Prime Minister and President Herzog looked forward to further deepening the close ties between the UK and Israel, including in trade and investment and collaboration in technology innovation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-president-isaac-herzog-of-israel-7-november-2022>

Palestine Refugee Agency Appeals for Substantial Funding Boost as Fourth Committee Speakers Support its Mandate Renewal

... **Mohamed Al Hassan (Oman), Committee Chair**, recalled that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is mandated by the General Assembly to assist more than 5.4 million Palestine refugees, who account for over 20 per cent of refugees worldwide. ...

Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) ... [said] This year has been difficult for Palestine refugees across the region as they faced more challenges to the fulfilment of their basic rights, with poverty made worse by the socioeconomic ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the war in Ukraine on employment, prices and soaring inflation. Nearly all refugees now rely on the UNRWA food basket ... However, the Agency's financial situation is tying its hands, making it unable to support a community that has reached rock-bottom ...

Despite this bleak daily reality, UNRWA continues to make a difference for millions of Palestine refugees, he said. Close to two million Palestine refugees access quality primary health care in UNRWA health centres, while a like number of the poorest refugees receive cash or food assistance. ... Meanwhile, shifting geopolitical priorities and regional dynamics have deprioritized the Israel-Palestine conflict, with a growing number of competing crises over the last decade sadly increasing indifference towards the plight of Palestine refugees ...

The Agency is unique within the United Nations system as it relies almost exclusively on voluntary funding, he said, emphasizing that the chronic financial shortfall undermines its ability to fulfil its mandate while also threatening its stabilizing role in the region. ...

... **the observer for the State of Palestine** thanked UNRWA's leadership and staff and noted the Agency's immense contribution to the sustenance and resilience of Palestine refugees. The renewal of its mandate comes at a historical juncture, she said, calling for political support from the international community. ... Expressing regret that UNRWA continues to be hampered by insufficient funding and is solely reliant on voluntary contributions, she asked the Commissioner-General to elaborate on UNRWA's funding needs and to address the matter of additional costs that continue to rise from restrictions imposed on it, such as on the movement of goods, the closure of refugee camps and undue taxation.

The representative of the European Union ... said that UNRWA is an essential provider of vital services to millions of Palestine refugees and a stabilizing force in the region. Her bloc will continue to support the Agency in all its fields of operations, including in East Jerusalem ...

The representative of Lebanon, noting that the word "discrimination" appears in the report with regard to the situation of Palestine refugees in Lebanon, explained that their situation is special as they have lived in the country for decades. He asked whether it was just to use that term when Lebanon has been providing for Palestine refugees, giving them access to superior education and subsidies to obtain higher-level certificates. ...

Feda Abdelhady-Nasser, an observer for the State of Palestine, stated that for over seven decades, UNRWA has been a lifeline for Palestine refugees. Without UNRWA, their plight would be even more unbearable and tragic and the Middle East even more turbulent, with consequences far beyond the region. Over 80 per cent of Palestine refugees in Gaza, more than half of them children, and those in Syria and Lebanon now live in poverty. As instability and wants rise, despair also rises, especially among youth, who are more prone to hopelessness and radicalization. Any further reduction of UNRWA programmes will heighten the sense of despair among Palestine refugees and fears that the world is turning its back on them, she said. The chronic, structural underfunding of UNRWA, consequent

stresses on the Agency's staff and refugee community and worries of more to come inevitably stoke these fears. ...

The representative of Israel, speaking in exercise of the right to reply ... said the Palestinians' constant refusal to accept the concept of Jewish sovereignty over any part of the land is the reason that there is a refugee crisis and why it cannot be resolved. Had the Palestinians accepted the partition plan in 1967, there would be two States living side-by-side in peace, but the Palestinians did everything they could to impede this solution. She added that UNRWA created a system of inheritance which allows refugees to pass along their refugee status to future generations. The result is a refugee population unlike any other in the world, she said.

The representative of the State of Palestine ... said that the General Assembly's partition plan adopted 75 years ago remains unimplemented due to Israel's deliberate obstruction of the sovereignty of the State of Palestine and of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. While the Palestinian leadership long ago accepted the two-State solution, there has been no reciprocation from Israel. She rejected false comparisons of UNRWA to UNHCR, and of Palestine refugees to those from Afghanistan and other countries. The claim of return is not a claim, but a right, which all refugees, no matter their place of origin, are entitled to, she said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2022/gaspd768.doc.htm>

Report of the Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East 1 January–31 December 2021(A/77/13)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/77/13>

Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/77/314)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/77/314>

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Other Relevant Information

Antisemitism Policy Trust

The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion: Unpacking the Notorious Antisemitic Forgery

<https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/APT-Protocols-Report.pdf>

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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>

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>

Scottish Parliament

** Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

Notice of amendments

<https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/s6-bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill/stage-2/daily-list-7-november-2022.pdf>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

** *closes in 6 days*

Mapping Exercise - Youth Workers supporting young people facing racism & antisemitism in Scotland (closing date 14 November 2022)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Z5YX2C7>

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