Home Affairs

Welsh Senedd Oral Answer

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip

114 Altai Hussain (Conservative): … All of us have a role to play in combating hate, which is why I was delighted to learn yesterday that the organisers of the Glastonbury Festival have decided to cancel a screening of the documentary, Oh, Jeremy Corbyn: The Big Lie. The film claims to tell the story of what caused the Corbyn project to fail. Seventeen minutes in, after presenting evidence of an orchestrated campaign against Corbyn, the narrator, Alexei Sayle, asks: ‘But if it was an orchestrated campaign, who was in the orchestra?’ There follows a silent montage showing the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Labour Movement, Labour Friends of Israel, and the Israel Advocacy Movement, using captions and pictures to state that which, if spoken aloud, would be blatant antisemitism, which is why the Board of Deputies of British Jews called upon Glastonbury organisers to cancel the showing …

118 Minister, do you agree that this attempt to rewrite history and its shameful antisemitic tropes have no place in Wales, and will you join me in calling upon all venues in Wales not to screen this hateful film?

119 Jane Hutt [Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip] Llywydd, can I just say, and also it’s an opportunity to remind the Member and Members in the Chamber, that, in 2017, the Welsh Government adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s working definition of antisemitism in full and without qualification?

https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/13382#C513615
Holocaust

House of Lords Standing Orders Committee

Holocaust Memorial Bill: Uncorrected Transcript of Evidence Session, 19 June 2023

15 Robbie Owen (Pinsent Masons LLP, Agent for the Bill): … the primary purpose of the Bill is to facilitate the coming forward of a memorial to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and an associated learning centre at Victoria Tower Gardens by removing pre-existing legislative impediments, as well as to authorise the Secretary of State to incur expenditure in relation to the memorial and learning centre, wherever it may be located.

16 The Bill does not authorise any works or other operations to facilitate the memorial and learning centre. Instead, the usual consents, not least planning permission, will need to be obtained separately. The memorial and learning centre could not come forward without those consents. …

17 The Government’s aim is for the Bill to receive Royal Assent as quickly as possible with a view to completing the memorial and learning centre while Holocaust survivors are still living. As the committee will appreciate, there is some urgency, given this overarching aim. …

22 As they set out in their statement of reasons, the Examiners concluded that the following Standing Orders applied to the Bill and had not been complied with: first, Standing Orders 4, 10 and 11, which concern the publication of notices; secondly, Standing Order 4A, which requires the Bill to be made available for inspection and sale; and, thirdly, Standing Orders 38 and 39, which concern the depositing of copies of the Bill with certain parliamentary offices, government departments, and other public bodies.

23 It is fully acknowledged that these Standing Orders had not been complied with, which is why the Secretary of State is respectfully seeking a dispensation from the committee today …

25 … it is submitted that the primary purpose of the Standing Orders is to ensure that persons who are specially and directly affected by the Bill are made aware of its passage through Parliament and, critically, are given advance notice of the ability to petition against the Bill. The petitioning process does not start until the Bill has been read for a second time in the House of Commons, which has not yet occurred. As such, the opportunity to petition against the Bill has not been missed. …

26 Therefore, no prejudice has been caused by the non-compliance with the Standing Orders to date …

28 Indeed, turning to the three tests referred to in our submissions for dispensation with Standing Orders, as set out in Erskine May, the Secretary of State considers that these have been met. This is primarily because, first, it is in the public interest for the Bill to proceed; secondly, the Secretary of State, as promoter, has not been negligent or acted carelessly in this matter; and, thirdly, no one has been adversely affected by non-compliance to date. …

53 Baroness Deech (Baroness Deech and Holocaust Survivors): … We are dealing with a substantive and significant issue of the rule of law and parliamentary procedure. The argument made on behalf of the Secretary of State, which is that it does not matter because now everybody knows and will have an opportunity, essentially drains all meaning from the Standing Orders, because in every case one could simply say, “Well, all right, we didn’t do it in time, but now you will have the opportunity to petition”. That undermines the whole point of the Standing Orders. …

55 My argument, and that of my fellow memorialists, is that the damage was done last year when the Court of Appeal found that the 1900 statute applied. That was the end of the matter; there was no further appeal. Naturally, those who objected to the memorial relaxed and failed to carry on raising money, trying to see Ministers and spreading the word. We
have lost about eight months in which we could have been crowdfunding, as we have been, gathering objections and spreading the word among the Jewish community. The damage has been done, and it is no good saying, “Well, it doesn’t matter now, because now you’ve heard about it”.

58 ... I would argue that it is impossible that the Secretary of State could not have known that this was hybrid. We lived through a public inquiry three years ago that went on for months. Day after day, local people and groups came forward to explain why Victoria Tower Gardens was not a good location for them. The transcript is there; it was considered by the High Court and the Court of Appeal. The whole procedure was about the effect on local residents.

59 The Secretary of State could not have ignored that. It simply strains credulity that the department was unaware that this was an issue of great importance to local residents, and indeed to workers. ...

60 ... The argument that it must be built in time for the current survivors does not hold water. A memorial and museum, if built, is not for the handful of survivors still alive today; it is for future generations. ...

61 Moreover, just this morning the obituary appeared in the Times of a very well-known survivor, Ben Helfgott. He is quoted in that obituary as saying that he wanted a memorial and how very pleased he was that it had taken shape in the Imperial War Museum’s Holocaust Galleries. He apparently was satisfied with that. ...

62 There are at least half a dozen Holocaust memorials and museums in this country—more, depending on how you count them. Indeed, there are 300 or so around the world. So in no practical sense is there any damage in delay. ...

68 Helen Monger (London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust): For the record, and the avoidance of any doubt, London Parks and Gardens supports the noble ambitions of the sponsor department to deliver a fitting Holocaust memorial. However, the size of the proposed construction and the chosen location of the proposals before you require the suspension of environmental protections afforded to Victoria Tower Gardens, a grade 2 listed public park—a fact that we have drawn to the attention of the department since 2019 but have been repeatedly ignored throughout the planning process. Had the department heeded objectors’ warnings, the ambitions of the Holocaust Commission could have been expedited to the satisfaction of everyone before you now. That delay, resulting from governmental intransigence, is truly regrettable. ...

71 Campaigners were told at the planning inquiry that the site at Victoria Tower Gardens was chosen due to its juxtaposition to Parliament. The construction of the learning centre in the park, so close to Parliament, would permanently remind our parliamentarians and politicians of the virtues of democracy and the rule of law, providing a bulwark to totalitarian regimes.

72 ... If the Government’s mission is to encourage democratic engagement, it is perverse to now seek to waive the very rules provided by Parliament to ensure that that necessary democratic process is fulfilled due to their inconvenience.

78 More seriously, however, at the introduction of the Bill, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities produced an erroneous briefing that it distributed to most MPs. Objectors produced a response to this as quickly as they could and had the assistance of the Father of the House’s staff to help distribute our corrections, but we do not know how far that reached. ...

94 Donald Peck (Thorney Island Society): The Thorney Island Society and its members are not in any way opposed to the building of an appropriate memorial to the Holocaust. ... However, this committee needs to be aware, as you have already heard from some of my colleagues, that there has been a strong element of consistency in the approach taken by the Government to this project over the last seven and a half years. Their approach has been one of deliberate minimisation of public engagement, consultation and dialogue with
any of the affected and interested parties. …

99 Richard Buxton (Buxton Family and the Thomas Fowell Buxton Society): … the setting of the memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens to the abolition of slavery, which was seen through Parliament by our ancestor in 1833, will, under the Secretary of State’s current plans, be harmed and would in any event be dwarfed by the proposed Holocaust memorial. The Buxton memorial, which fits well in the gardens in line with existing legislation, must be respected and protected along with the abolition of slavery, which it commemorates. …

The Examination went into private session at 3.58 pm.
The Examination resumed at 4.20 pm.

125 Chair (Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Non-affiliated): … We are now in public session again. … I said deliberately that we are in public session. The views that have been expressed today will have been heard and I am sure there will be other opportunities elsewhere for these views to be expressed.

126 … this committee has a narrowness of looking at the requirements of the Standing Orders. It is on that basis that we came to a decision that the Standing Orders referred to in the Examiners’ certificate—namely, Standing Orders 4, 4A, 10, 11, 38 and 39—should be dispensed with. …

To read the full transcript see
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51815/documents/3656

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Israel

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Updated Travel Advice: Israel
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel

Updated Travel Advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories

Delegation of the European Union to the State of Israel

Israel/Palestine: Statement by the Spokesperson on terror attack near Eli settlement
The European Union firmly condemns Tuesday’s terrorist attack near the settlement of Eli in the occupied West Bank.
In this attack, at least four Israelis were killed and four were injured.
Terrorism in all its forms is unacceptable and never an answer. The EU remains firmly committed to the prevention of and fight against terrorism.
The EU is deeply worried about the ongoing escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and continued settlement expansion. We urge all parties to work towards de-escalation and ending the cycle of violence.
United Nations

Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

The Secretary-General is deeply troubled by the continued violence and loss of life in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Secretary-General condemns all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror. This includes yesterday’s shooting by two armed Palestinians that killed four Israelis in the occupied West Bank and injured others and the ensuing acts of vandalism and torching of land and properties -- including a school, by Israeli settlers in Palestinian villages around Nablus and Ramallah.

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned about the events in Jenin on 19 June, when an Israeli security forces (ISF) operation and ensuing exchange of fire resulted in seven Palestinians killed, including two children, both students at UNRWA schools.

It is crucial to reduce tensions and to prevent further escalation. Israel, as the Occupying Power, must ensure that the civilian population is protected against all acts of violence, and that perpetrators are held to account. Israel must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the proportional use of force and the taking of all feasible precautions to spare civilians in the conduct of military operations.

Ultimately, only a return to a meaningful political process and ending the occupation will bring an end to this devastating cycle of violence and senseless loss of life.


UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Right of return of Palestinian refugees must be prioritised over political considerations: UN experts

... “As we observed World Refugee Day and honour the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year, it is imperative to recognise the enduring challenges that continue to impact the treatment of forcibly displaced persons. Within this context, it is particularly important to address the role of countries in the Global North, as the shade of racism, supremacism, patriarchy and the historical legacy of colonial endeavours still heavily influences the approach toward situations of forcibly displaced persons. ...

This reality is all too familiar for the Palestinian people, 75 years since the Nakba - the event that shattered Palestinian lives and severed their ancestral connection to their land during the establishment of the State of Israel. Since then, they have endured forced displacement, dispossession, and disenfranchisement, with their rights to self-determination, restitution, and compensation repeatedly denied. For 75 years, their cry for justice, embodied in the demand for the right to return, has resounded with unwavering determination.

For Palestinians, forced displacement has become part of their life for generations, tracing back to 1947-1949 when over 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee massacres and mass expulsions and forcible transfers during the birth of the State of Israel. The majority, along with their descendants, are still in neighbouring Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, while 40 per cent of them remain under occupation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since 1967. Progressively, Palestinian exile has scattered them across various nations globally.

Since 1948, both the General Assembly and the Security Council have consistently called upon Israel to facilitate the return of Palestinian refugees and provide reparations.
Despite these repeated appeals, Palestinian refugees have been systematically denied of their right to return and forced to live in exile under precarious and vulnerable conditions outside the borders of Palestine. The right of return constitutes a fundamental pillar of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. The fragmentation of the Palestinian people, both geographically and politically, through administrative methods of control based on residency and race, tantamount to apartheid, has obstructed the realisation of the right to return and self-determination. These practices serve the settler-colonial project pursued by Israel.

We urgently call upon the international community to adopt a rights-based approach that addresses the root causes of violence and prioritises the individual and collective right of return for refugees and internally displaced persons, over political considerations. As the largest and most protracted displaced population since World War II, the Palestinian experience should serve as a poignant reminder to the international community of the suffering and vulnerability endured by refugees and internally displaced persons, urging immediate action to recognise and uphold their rights.”

To read the full statement see https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/06/right-return-palestinian-refugees-must-be-prioritised-over-political

Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answer

Prime Minister's Questions

David Davis (Conservative) [905580] The United Kingdom sanctioned Iran for promoting terrorism, destabilising the middle east, supplying weapons to our enemies and, of course, the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Within the past few weeks, the journalist, David Rose, has reported in the Jewish Chronicle that British universities have been undertaking research in collaboration with Iranian researchers and universities into areas of potential military applications, including drone technology, fighter jets, battlefield armour and laser communication. Will the Prime Minister initiate an investigation into this and take action to stop the failure of our sanctions regime before it does any more harm to the national interest of the United Kingdom and our allies?

The Prime Minister: I thank my right hon. Friend for raising this important topic. We take all allegations of breaches of export control seriously. My understanding is that officials in the Department for Business and Trade are currently investigating the allegations made in the recent press article cited. We will not accept collaborations that compromise our national security. That is why we have made our systems more robust, including expanding the scope of the Academic Technology Approval Scheme to protect UK research from ever-changing global threats, but my right hon. Friend is absolutely right to highlight that and he has my assurance that we will keep on it.

https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-06-21/debates/5D682751-CCAF-4CF9-9853-9D8ADF4E576F/Engagements#contribution-B998B532-D5E3-4EAF-B0D9-981F99853BD0

House of Commons Written Answer

Middle East: Minority Groups

John Howell (Conservative) [189938] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign,
Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to help strengthen the rights of indigenous (a) Kurdish, (b) Yazidi and (c) Jewish groups in the Middle East.

**David Rutley:** Building respect for human rights, including Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) and the rights of ethnic and religious groups, is a crucial element underpinning the UK’s foreign policy in the Middle East. We regularly emphasise the importance of human rights through our engagements with Governments and other key partners. We will continue to monitor the situation for ethnic and religious groups in the region, to speak out against human rights violations and abuses, and to press authorities to safeguard the human rights for all their citizens.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-16/189938

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**Relevant Legislation**  **new or updated today**

**UK Parliament**

**Bill of Rights Bill**  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227

**Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill**  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3475
Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Memorandum  
Impact Assessment  

**Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill**  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186

**Holocaust Memorial Bill**  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421
The House of Lords Standing Orders Committee … decided that the applicable Standing Orders should be dispensed with. … the Government has therefore announced a date for Second Reading of the Bill in the House of Commons on Wednesday 28 June.  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421/news
Uncorrected Transcript of House of Lords Standing Orders Committee  
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51815/documents/3656

**Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325

**Online Safety Bill**  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137

**Nakba Commemoration Bill**  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3461
Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438

Schools Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3454

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

Consultations

** closes tomorrow
Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill (closing date 23 June 2023)
https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3146/

Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)

A Human Rights Bill for Scotland (closing date 5 October 2023)