Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Public Bodies: Wales

Ben Lake (Plaid Cymru) [190870] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect of the provisions in the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill on (a) the Welsh Government, (b) Welsh Government funded public bodies and (c) Welsh local authorities and their freedom to not procure goods originating from Israeli settlements deemed to be illegal under international law.

Lee Rowley: The bill is designed to implement the Government’s manifesto commitment to “ban public bodies from imposing their own direct or indirect boycotts, divestment or sanctions campaigns against foreign countries”. As such, and to ensure a consistent foreign policy approach across the UK, the Bill applies to public bodies across the whole of the UK and therefore the Welsh Government, Welsh public bodies, and Welsh local authorities will be subject to the ban. Accordingly, we are seeking a legislative consent motion to apply the ban to Ministers of the Welsh Government.

The Government’s position on the settlements in the ‘Occupied Palestinian Territories’ and indeed the Middle East Peace Process more generally is unchanged.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-22/190870

Television Channels: Minority Groups

Jamie Stone (Liberal Democrat) [190460] To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of the effectiveness of smaller TV channels in catering to (a) faith groups, (b) specific ethnic groups, (c) minority groups and (d) local audiences.

John Whittingdale: The Government recognises the importance of a diverse broadcasting landscape for communities around the country, with hundreds of channels, large and small, catering to a wide range of audiences.

The Government is committed to supporting a broadcasting sector that delivers for
all audiences. On a local level, the BBC, local TV providers and commercial and community radio stations all play a crucial role in disseminating accurate news and local information, strengthening pride of place, reflecting the unique interests of the audiences that they serve, connecting communities, and helping to address social issues like loneliness and mental health.

The Government also believes that it is important that the broadcasting industry – both on- and off-screen – is representative of the country in which we live. In this context, the Government recognises the editorial and operational independence of the broadcasting sector and understands the value of smaller channels and content that caters to specific audiences.

The BBC also plays an important role in delivering this, and in the UK’s wider public service broadcasting ecosystem, with a mission to serve all audiences through the provision of impartial, high-quality and distinctive output and services which inform, educate and entertain.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-20/190460

House of Lords Written Answers

Radicalism

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated) [HL8551] To ask His Majesty’s Government, further to the remarks by the Minister of State for Immigration in answer to Stephen Farry on 29 March (HC Deb col 1033), whether they have adopted a common definition of "far-right"; and if so, what it is.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The Intelligence and Security Committee’s report on Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism defines Far Right as “an umbrella term to encapsulate the entire movement which has a Far-Right political outlook in relation to matters such as culture, race, immigration and identity”. The Home Office uses the definition as set out by the ISC in this report.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-15/hl8551

The remarks referred to above can be read at https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-29/debates/5C905292-65BA-4B59-9AB9-D41F52605895/IllegalMigrationUpdate#contribution-7A1CDBE8-A3E0-482F-B68F-92D9A22E30BE

The report referred to above can be read at https://isc.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/E02710035-HCP-Extreme-Right-Wing-Terrorism_Accessible.pdf

HOPE not Hate

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated) [HL8548] To ask His Majesty’s Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Sharpe of Epsom on 2 June (HL7951), what action they have taken against (1) groups, or (2) individuals, of Islamist extremist concern; when they took that action; and what was the outcome.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: Some groups publicly demonstrate behaviours that oppose the values and principles that underpin our society. The Government is committed to tackling those who spread Islamist views that promote violence and hatred against individuals and communities in our society. This includes using existing mechanisms to analyse, prevent and disrupt the spread of ideologies that can lead to community division.

We assess all evidence of those that radicalise others though their support for or justification of violence and will not tolerate those who spread divisive and harmful narratives.
We work with local, regional and national partners, including with policing, to reduce the impact of these groups in communities and limit their influence as a potential driver for radicalisation. We continue to work with law enforcement agencies and multi-agency partners to increase our understanding of new and emerging radicalising threats to society. Any violent threat is assessed and managed by the police and security services based on the threat that it is deemed to pose. The Home Office avoids publicly commenting on whether or not specific groups or individuals are of Islamist extremist concern, as this could have a detrimental effect on our ability to take future action against them.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-15/hl8548

The answer referred to above can be read at
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-05-18/hl7951

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Hate Crime

Monica Lennon (Labour) [S6W-19239] To ask the Scottish Government what immediate action it is taking in response to reports of rising levels of hate crimes being committed.

Siobhian Brown: The Scottish Government unequivocally condemns any form of hate crime. The latest figures from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service are a reminder to redouble our efforts to tackle hate and confront prejudice wherever it occurs. We are resolute in our commitment to tackling all incidents of hate crime and we encourage everyone who experiences or witnesses hate crime to report it directly to the police or by using a third party reporting centre.

In March, we published a new Hate Crime Strategy which sets out our vision for a Scotland where everyone lives free from hatred and prejudice, and where our communities are empowered, inclusive and safe. The strategy makes a number of commitments including ensuring improved support for victims of hate crime, improving data and evidence on hate crime and developing effective approaches to preventing hate crime. It will also support implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021.

A delivery plan, setting out our immediate and longer term activity, will be published later this year.


The COPFS figures referred to above can be read at

and

The Strategy referred to above can be read at

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021

Annabelle Ewing (SNP) [S6W-19193] To ask the Scottish Government when it plans to introduce commencement regulations for the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021.

Siobhian Brown: The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 will consolidate, modernise and extend existing hate crime legislation in Scotland. We are working closely with justice partners to ensure effective implementation of the Hate Crime Act.

We continue to work towards a commencement period of early 2024 in order to
provide sufficient time to allow justice partners to complete a number of IT change programmes which will support implementation. Officials and Ministers are continuing to engage regularly with justice partners with a view to ensuring the necessary IT changes are delivered in time for implementation by our early 2024 deadline. Hate crimes will continue to be dealt with under existing hate crime legislation until such time as the Act comes into force.


The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, referred to above, can be read at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2021/14/contents

Scottish Government

https://tinyurl.com/4apxyvjk

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service

Hate Crime in Scotland, 2022-23

Hate Crime in Scotland, 2022-23, data tables

Israel

Also see written answer 190870 “Public Bodies: Wales” which is included in the Home Affairs section above.

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Prisoners

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [190345] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterparts on the Bill in the Knesset to amend the Prisons Ordinance (Revoking Eligibility for Funding Healthcare Services to Improve Quality of Life for Security Prisoners); and whether he has made representations to those counterparts on the need to ensure that prisoners receive medical care equal to that available to the general public.

David Rutley: The British Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of regularised access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities. We recognise that under International Humanitarian Law, Israel, as the occupying power, has a duty of ensuring and maintaining public health to the fullest extent of the means available to it. The UK Government welcomes any effort to cooperate between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, including in the healthcare sector. The wounded and ill in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) should be able to access the
Walid Daqqa

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [190347] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials in his Department have had discussion with their Israeli counterparts on (a) releasing Walid Al Daqqa and (b) whether Walid Al Daqqa’s medical needs are being met in the IPS medical centre.

David Rutley: Israel must abide by its obligations under International Humanitarian Law. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of regularised access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities. We recognise that under International Humanitarian Law, Israel, as the occupying power, has a duty of ensuring and maintaining public health to the fullest extent of the means available to it. The wounded and ill in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) should be able to access the urgent medical care they need.

United Nations

Tragic Deformity in Palestinian Political Culture ‘Result of Continued Brutality of Occupation’, Institute Head Tells Security Council

… James Zogby, Arab American Institute, said that Palestinian victims need to be known and the impact of the humiliation and abuse on these families must be understood. He shared stories of families given an hour notice “before the bulldozers came” or the farmer standing powerless as 100-year-old orchards were demolished. “Behind each incident are real people whose lives were upended, futures darkened, their families traumatized and angry,” he said. Annually the General Assembly speaks to these violations of human rights, but its resolutions are ignored. When Palestinians prepare a case for the International Criminal Court, they’re threatened with sanctions. These violations continue to occur daily, impacting the lives of real people. “Their voices must be heard,” he stressed, underlining the special responsibility the United Nations has in regard to the matter. Israel is the only country conditionally admitted for membership, obligating it to implement United Nations resolutions past prior to its admission. It is not Israel that is being singled out for criticism, rather it is Israel that is being singled-out by some in the United States and excused for its behaviour. There is an extremist political culture in Israel today. Polling data demonstrates that a majority of Israelis do not view Palestinians as equal human beings. Given the traumatic nightmare visited upon millions of Palestinians for the past 56 years, is it any wonder that a recent poll shows a majority Palestinian rejecting moderate leadership and favouring armed struggle, he asked. “This tragic deformity in Palestinian political culture is the result of the continued brutality of the Occupation,” he added. Israel needs to know that there are red lines, which, if crossed, have consequences. And Palestinians need to know they are not alone and that violence is not the answer. “Only after we have changed the political dynamic and helped transform the political deformities infecting both societies can a political horizon emerge and meaningful negotiations take place,” he said.

Tor Wennesland, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process … said there has been an alarming spike in violence across the northern and central occupied West Bank, leading to numerous Palestinian and Israeli casualties. Military operations — including air strikes in the West Bank — attacks and extremely high levels of settler-related violence have intensified dramatically, alongside the use of more sophisticated weapons by Palestinians, including an advanced improvised
explosive device and rockets launched towards Israel. …

“I am particularly alarmed by the extreme levels of settler violence, including large numbers of settlers, many armed, systematically attacking Palestinian villages, terrorizing communities, sometimes in the proximity of and/or with the support of Israeli security forces,” he said. Israel, as the occupying Power, has an obligation to protect Palestinians and their property in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to ensure independent, impartial and transparent investigations into all acts of violence. …

“I remain deeply troubled by the relentless expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, that fuels violence and is impeding access by Palestinians to their land and resources,” he said, noting the alarm the recent Israeli Government decision which may expedite expansion in Area C. Israeli settlements constitute a flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions and international law. …

Robert A. Wood (United States), expressing concern over the impact of recent violence on United States citizens, said his country is engaging with the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to secure the welfare of such individuals and to provide “equal measures of justice and security” for all Palestinian and Israeli civilians affected. Israel’s recent announcement advancing more than 5,000 settlement units — along with changes to settlement administration that expedite the planning and approval of settlements — is deeply troubling, he went on to say. …

Vassily A. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) voiced concern over Israel intensifying steps to create irreversible facts on the ground, including forcible evictions of Palestinians, destruction of their houses and seizures of their property. … In June, the Israeli Government decided to expedite the bureaucratic procedures that are needed to build more than 4,500 housing units in the West Bank, which is a violation of international law. …

Fergus John Eckersley (United Kingdom) said the security situation in the West Bank and Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to deteriorate. Last week saw more loss of life, when seven people, including two children, were killed in an Israeli raid in the city of Jenin in the West Bank. While Israel has a right to defend itself, its security operations must be in line with international humanitarian law. Terror attacks, such as the killing of four Israelis near the settlement of Eli by Hamas-affiliated gunmen on 20 June are barbaric and unjustifiable. The glorification of these killers by Hamas and other organizations is abhorrent. …

Nicolas De Rivière (France) strongly condemned all attacks targeting civilians, in particular the terrorist attack perpetrated on 20 June in the West Bank, killing at least four Israelis, as well as the growing violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians — including the destruction of their homes and property. Expressing serious concern over clashes that took place on 19 June during an intervention by the Israeli army in Jenin, which left at least six dead — including a child — he stressed that children should not be targeted. …

Gilad Menashe Erdan (Israel), detailing Palestinian terror attacks and noting that they are underreported, said that, since the start of 2023, Israelis have been victims of over 3,500 attacks, and each day that number grows. The Palestinian terror fueled by incitement and incentivization of violence spewed from all levels of Palestinian leadership is the root cause of this conflict and any escalation, he stressed. Asking why the Council continuously ignores the Palestinian authorities’ promotion of terror and murder of civilians, he emphasized that the terror that Israeli civilians in Jerusalem, Judea and Samara face every single day is exponentially worse than what is conveyed in Council briefings. Israel is a democracy governed by the rule of law, he emphasized, stressing that: “Extremists who take the law into their own hands through vigilantism and violence cross a red line and will not be condoned by Israel.”

The Palestinians are interested in one thing only: the destruction of the very notion of a Jewish State, he emphasized. That cancerous hatred, which has poisoned the minds of children and adults, is the root of the conflict and must be addressed and condemned by
the Council. Turning to the Israeli building permits in Judea and Samaria, he stressed that those steps are not an impediment to peace and building there will not stop. …

**Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine**, said he would not dignify his Israeli counterpart’s customary barrage of lies and distortions with a response. Stubborn fascist enemies of peace will not learn from the fact the Council members were not responding in any positive way to those statements, he stressed, calling it “a theatre of the absurd”. He said the Israeli Government is “bringing to its ultimate conclusion a plan decades in the making: a State for the settlers in place of the Palestinian State”. Israel knows its actions are condemned worldwide, but as long as they can displace Palestinians, they will continue …

“What would you do if you were a Palestinian — if every day could be your last, killed in the street or your home?”, he asked. Noting they have asked for protection, that the Council has passed resolutions and that Palestinians have joined the International Criminal Court, he further asked when concrete measures will be taken. “No one wins if despair prevails,” he stressed — as despair will not lead to surrender, but more anger, with the Palestinian people facing an existential threat with no help on the way. Noting that Council members support the two-State solution on the 1967 borders, with an independent Palestine living side by side with Israel, he asked: “How come what is happening in Palestine is possible?” …

*To read the full press release see*

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**Relevant Legislation**

**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

*See written answer 190870 “Public Bodies: Wales” which is included in the Home Affairs section above*

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

**Holocaust Memorial Bill**
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421

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

**Online Safety Bill**
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137
The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438

**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** **new or updated today**

**Charities tax compliance** (closing date 20 July 2023)

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