

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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House of Commons Oral Answers

Topical Questions: Home Secretary – Antisemitism

Craig Whittaker: During a recent delegation as part of the all-party parliamentary group against antisemitism, it became clear that international parliamentary colleagues are concerned about the rise of hate crime, and in particular anti-Semitism from the left in UK universities. Does my right hon. Friend agree with me, and indeed with Baroness Royall when she said that Labour does not take anti-Semitism seriously, as seen by the inaction against members of Oxford University who were accused of anti-Semitism, and that this has, of course, a wider impact on hate crime in general?

Amber Rudd: I thank my hon. Friend for raising this important matter, particularly during Holocaust Memorial Week. As he will know, the Government published a hate crime action plan to drive forward action to tackle all forms of hate crime, and to enable Departments across the Government to work with police and communities. However, I completely agree with him that all organisations, including universities and political parties, have an obligation to stamp out anti-Semitism wherever it is encountered.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-23/debates/9E068E8F-5009-4F91-A444-66205BF6D781/Migration#contribution-DCF0850A-0A8F-48A8-A7A0-2CC31946354F>

Topical Questions: Home Secretary – Hate crime

T6. **John Mann:** Waffle, Mr Speaker—waffle is all that we get in answer to questions about dealing with hate crime on Facebook and Twitter and on the internet. If Germany can fine these companies half a million pounds every time they fail to take down hate speech posts within 24 hours, why can we not also take practical action to hold them to account for their failure to deal with hate speech? [908323]

Sarah Newton: The hon. Gentleman has made a very important point. Hate crime has no place whatsoever in our society. It destroys communities and people's lives, and we are taking every possible action against it. We have the strongest legislative framework in the world, and that includes working with internet providers. I can absolutely assure the hon. Gentleman that we have agreements with internet providers, and that when hate crime is identified, they will take the horrendous stuff down.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-23/debates/9E068E8F-5009-4F91-A444-66205BF6D781/Migration#contribution-69CA42E8-7473-4B9B-B21C-5AEABF729EB5>

Topical Questions: Home Secretary – Antisemitism

Joan Ryan: In the light of Holocaust Memorial Day this week, will the Minister join me in paying tribute to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Holocaust Educational Trust, which remind us of the worst example we have ever witnessed of where anti-Semitism can lead? In the light of the publication of the Community Security Trust 2016 anti-Semitic incident report next week, and bearing in mind the fact that last year saw the third highest annual level of anti-Semitic hate incidents in the UK, what are the Government doing to combat rising levels of anti-Semitism?

Amber Rudd: I thank the right hon. Lady for giving me this opportunity to join her in thanking the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Holocaust Educational Trust for the extraordinary work that they do in reminding us all of what took place. I am one of the MPs—I am sure that there are many here—who took the opportunity to visit, and I will always remember the impact of that. I work closely with the Community Security Trust, and I made the hate crime action plan my priority. We will continue to work with the trust to ensure that we do what we can to stop any form of anti-Semitism.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-23/debates/9E068E8F-5009-4F91-A444-66205BF6D781/Migration#contribution-6905CA51-3E64-4076-9E57-B2C8D3BB47F0>

House of Commons Written Answer

Hate Crime

Joan Ryan [908295] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of hate crime reporting.

Sarah Newton: There were 62,518 hate crimes recorded by the police in 2015/16, an increase of 19% over the previous year. There were increases in all five hate crime strands - race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity. Improvements in recording by the police, a greater awareness of hate crime and improved willingness of victims to come forward are likely to have led to the increase in recorded crime.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-17/908295/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Community Relations

Lord Hylton [HL4509] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, following the Casey Review, they intend to consult religious and community leaders at regional and city level about appropriate measures to improve community cohesion and common citizenship.

Reply from Lord Hylton of Aberystwyth: Yes we intend to step up our ongoing engagement with a wide range of community groups and people, including religious and community leaders at a local level, as we develop our plans to improve cohesion, integration and citizenship.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-10/HL4509/>

The Casey Review, referred to above, can be read at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Review_Report.pdf

Public Sector: Ministers of Religion

Lord Murphy of Torfaen [HL4672] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to work with existing faith groups which have a strong history of providing training for faith leaders in public institutions.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government works with a range of faith groups and I regularly meet faith leaders and representatives of faith community groups as part of my role as Minister for Faith and Integration.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-16/HL4672/>

Hate Crime

Lord Hylton [HL4508] To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions they intend to take to increase the level of reporting of crimes inspired by racial or religious hatred; and what assessment they have made of whether a confidential telephone line would improve reporting rates.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government's Hate Crime Action Plan published last year outlined a range of activities to increase reporting across all hate crime strands. The National Police Chiefs' Council and officials from the cross-Government Hate Crime programme work closely with helpline providers such as Stop Hate UK to help improve the service they offer to victims and to share good practice.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-10/HL4508/>

The Hate Crime Action Plan referred to above can be read at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_-_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf

The website of the helpline referred to above is at

<https://www.stophateuk.org/>

Counter-terrorism

Lord Murphy of Torfaen [HL4426] To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will define structured training in relation to their review of training for faith leaders in public institutions in the Counter-Extremism Strategy.

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: The review is considering the training provided by public institutions to faith leaders of all faiths working in the prison service, health service, schools and higher and further education. The review is not examining the theological content of religious teaching.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-09/HL4426/>

Charity Commission

New charity investigation: Beth Yosef Foundation

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into Beth Yosef Foundation (registered charity number 1071268). ... The charity has objects to advance the Jewish Religion, in particular as practised by Sephardi Jews. ...

The Commission met with a trustee of the charity in November 2016.

The visit identified a number of serious regulatory concerns relating to the administration and financial management of the charity by the trustees. The Commission's concerns include a failure by the trustees to submit their annual returns, whether the charity has any validly appointed trustees, loan agreements entered into by the charity and the sale of property owned by the charity. ...

The Commission stresses that opening an inquiry is not in itself a finding of wrong doing. ...

To read the full press release see

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-charity-investigation-beth-yosef-foundation?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+CharityCommissionUpdates+%28Charity+Commission+updates%29

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Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answers

See the question from Joan Ryan included in the “Home Affairs” section above.

House of Commons Written Answers

Holocaust Memorial Day

Graham Evans [59999] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans her Department has to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

Caroline Dinenage: The Department held a Holocaust Memorial event on Monday 16 January. All of the staff were invited to a talk given by Harry Spiro, a Holocaust survivor.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-16/59999/>

Nazi War Crimes: Education

Graham Evans [60214] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it remains her Department's policy to support the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz Project.

Nick Gibb: The Department continues to believe that young people should be taught about the Holocaust and the lessons it teaches us today. We are committed to promoting, supporting and funding Holocaust Education.

Since the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz project began in 1999, it has taken more than 31,000 students and teachers to visit the site of the [Auschwitz-Birkenau](#) concentration camp. The Government announced in April last year that we had renewed our grant for the project for a further three years.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-17/60214/>

Northern Ireland Executive

Ministers to fund ‘Lessons from Auschwitz’ Project in schools

Education Minister, Peter Weir, and Communities Minister, Paul Givan, are to provide funding of £180,000 to enable the Holocaust Educational Trust to deliver its ‘Lessons from Auschwitz’ Project to Northern Ireland’s schools and colleges.

The announcement was made during a visit to Ards and North Down Museum where the Ministers had the opportunity to see a Holocaust exhibition which explores the history of the Kindertransport – the organised rescue effort that took place to bring Jewish children to the UK during the nine months prior to the outbreak of the Second World War.

Speaking today, Minister Weir said: “... it is important that we remember events such as

the Holocaust and learn from them. We must ensure our young people have an understanding of what went on and that they see where hatred, prejudice and intolerance can ultimately lead. The 'Lessons from Auschwitz' Project will be an extremely worthwhile and rewarding experience for our young people." ...

Communities Minister, Paul Givan, said: "My Department is delighted to fund 'Lessons from Auschwitz'. These are not just lessons from the past but lessons to be learned for today. The Holocaust was the most horrific event in all our history and unfortunately atrocities continue to take place across the world. It is important that the next generation of young people build a better world based on tolerance and mutual respect."

Karen Pollock MBE, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, said: "We are delighted that we will now be able to bring the 'Lessons from Auschwitz' Project to students in Northern Ireland. Thanks to this funding young people across Northern Ireland will have a life changing opportunity - alongside students from the rest of the UK.

"The Holocaust was the darkest episode in our shared history – the systematic, industrialised murder of six million people just because they were Jewish. As the young people who participate visit the notorious concentration and death camp, they become witnesses to the place that symbolises the depths of man's inhumanity to man. Not only will they be tasked with the responsibility to remember, but also with the responsibility to consider how they, the next generation, can make a positive difference. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/ministers-fund-lessons-auschwitz-project-schools>

Council of Europe

Commemoration events for victims of the Holocaust

Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland today opened a series of ceremonies to mark the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust.

In front of the commemorative stone on the forecourt of the Palais de l'Europe, addresses and wreath-laying were also made ...

Commemoration ceremonies and Remembrance events will also take place in several member states with the support of their Council of Europe field offices.

The exhibitions "Education and Remembrance - The Holocaust in Romania" and "There was a life" will be on display ... and a training activity for school children will be held at the European Youth Centre...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/commemoration-events-for-victims-of-the-holocaust>

United Nations

Secretary-General to Address Ceremony Marking International Day in Memory of Holocaust Victims, at United Nations Headquarters, 27 January

... The Holocaust memorial ceremony will be held under the theme "Holocaust Remembrance: Educating for a Better Future", which highlights the universal dimension of Holocaust education as an appropriate platform for building respect for human rights, increasing tolerance and defending our common humanity. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/note6494.doc.htm>

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House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Tommy Sheppard [60645] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to report to the House the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference on 15 January 2017.

Tobias Ellwood: There are currently no plans to report the outcome of the Paris Conference to the House. A readout of the conference is available on the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-18/60645/>

Israel: Bedouin

Richard Burden [60551] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the government of Israel on the demolition of the Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran in southern Israel; and if he will make a statement.

Tobias Ellwood: We continue to call on the Israeli authorities and Bedouin community to work together to find a solution that meets the needs and respects the rights of the people affected. This should include a robust planning process that adequately consults and addresses the needs of Israel's Bedouin communities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-18/60551/>

Israel: Security

Catherine West [60710] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the security situation in Umm al-Hiran since the car-ramming attack in that village in January 2017.

Tobias Ellwood: We are concerned by recent reports of violence in the Negev Bedouin village of Um al-Hiran in Israel . We understand that the Israeli authorities have issued a demolition order against the village. The UK calls on the Israeli authorities and Bedouin community to work together to find a solution that meets the needs and respects the rights of the people affected. This should include a robust planning process that adequately consults and addresses the needs of Israel's Bedouin communities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-18/60710/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement units in East Jerusalem

Foreign Office minister, Tobias Ellwood, said: It is the long held view of the British Government that settlements built on occupied Palestinian territory are contrary to international law and an obstacle to a two-state solution and we condemn them. The UK reiterates its support for a negotiated peace settlement that leads to an Israel that is safe from terrorism and a Palestinian state that is viable and sovereign.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-statement-on-settlement-units-in-east-jerusalem--3>

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Other Relevant Information

United Nations

Religious leaders deserve full support in quest for peace, says UN adviser on genocide prevention

... Addressing the third annual symposium on 'The Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations in International Affairs,' now under way at UN Headquarters in New York, Adama Dieng, the UN Special Adviser for Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, said that religious leaders "have a responsibility to contribute to the building of peaceful, inclusive and cohesive societies that are resilient to conflict, violent extremism and atrocity crimes." ...

"They can reach out to and influence large numbers of people," Mr. Dieng. He added that religious leaders "provide support during emergencies, respond to the needs of marginalized communities, as well as address grievances as soon as they emerge and advocate for the rights of their communities." ...

Mr. Dieng discussed his recent work with religious leaders on the [Fez Plan of Action](#) ... [which] will be launched in New York during the first quarter of this year, followed by meetings on its implementation. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56024#.Wldw7LZ96nY>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/arbitrationandmediationservicesequality.html>

Assisted Dying Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/assisteddying.html>

Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/culturalpropertyarmedconflicts.html>

Lobbying (Transparency) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/lobbyingtransparency.html>

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

Promotion of Israeli-Palestinian Peace (United Kingdom Participation)

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/promotionofisraelipalestinianpeaceunitedkingdomparticipation.html>

Wales Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/wales.html>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 7 days**

Welsh Assembly Inquiry into Lobbying (closing date 31 January 2017)

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=236&RPID=1507974161&cp=yes>

Consolidation and revision of the school governance regulatory framework in Wales

(closing date 17 February 2017)

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/consolidation-and-revision-school-governance-regulatory-framework-wales>

Racism at work (closing date 27 February 2017)

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

Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation: increasing numbers of successful donations (Scotland) (closing date 14 March 2017)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511160.pdf>

Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill (closing date 10 April 2017)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/adoption-and-children-northern-ireland-bill>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)

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

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